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No. 207.

MOTHER'S BOY.

BY FRANK M. LEBER.

Was mother's boy beautiful? Ask the blue clouds
Breaking away from their pale, clinging shrouds.
Why they paused in their breeze-borne flight,
To tinge his eyes with their azure light:
Melting, glistening in infantile joy,
Making more beautiful mother's dear boy.

Was mother's boy beautiful? Ask the bright ray,
Leaving its dizzy light, earthward to stray,
Why it strayed from kindred there
To sift its gold on his ringlets fair,
Furnishing all like a halo of joy,
Making more beautiful mother's sweet boy.

Is mother's boy beautiful? I fancy I hear
A wandering angel-tune, love-prisoned near:
"Beauty perfected clothes mother's boy now;
His sweet voice praise-lifted, gem-circled his brow;
Mother will see her boy when earthland, dim,
Blends with the Star-land, Heaven and him."

The Headless Horseman.

A STRANGE STORY OF TEXAS.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FRONTIER FORT.

THE "star-spangled banner" suspended
above Fort Inge, as it flouts forth from its
tall staff, flings its fitful shadow over a scene
of strange and original interest.

It is a picture of pure frontier life—which
perhaps only the pencil of the younger Vernet
could truthfully portray—half-military, half-
civilian—half-savage, half-civilized—mottled
with figures of men whose complexions, cos-
tumes, and callings, proclaim them appertain-
ing to the extremes of both, and every possible
gradation between.

Even the *mise-en-scene*—the fort itself—is of
this *miscellaneous* character. That star-spangled
banner waves not over bastions and battle-
ments; it flings no shadow over casemate or
covered way, fosse, scarpment, or glacis—
scarce any thing that appertains to a fortress.
A rude stockade, constructed out of trunks of
agave, inclosing shed-stabling for two hun-
dred horses; outside this a half-score buildings
of the plainest architectural style—some of
them mere huts of "wattle and daub"—*jacales*—
the biggest a barrack; behind in the hospital,
the stores of the commissary, and quarter-
master; on one side the guard-house; and on
the other, more pretentiously placed, the mess-
room and officers' quarters; all plain in their
appearance—plastered and whitewashed with
the lime plentifully found on the Leona—all
neat and clean, as becomes a cantonment of
troops wearing the uniform of a great civilized
nation. Such is Fort Inge.

At a short distance off another group of
houses meets the eye—nearly, if not quite, as
imposing as the cluster above described bear-
ing the name of "The Fort." They are just
outside the shadow of the flag, though under
its protection—for to it are they indebted for
their origin and existence. They are the gem
of the village that universally springs up in
the proximity of an American military post—in
all probability, and at no very remote period,
to become a town—perhaps a great city.

At present their occupants are a sutler,
whose store contains "knick-knacks" not
classed among commissariat rations; a hotel-
keeper whose bar-room, with white, sanded
floor, and shelves sparkling with prismatic
glass tempts the idler to step in; a brace of
gamblers whose rival tables of *faro* and *monte*
extract from the pockets of the soldiers most
part of their pay; a score of dark-eyed sen-
ioritas of questionable reputation; a like number
of hunters, teamsters, *mustangers*, and nonde-
scrips—such as constitute in all countries the
hangers-on of a military cantonment, or the
followers of a camp.

The houses in the occupancy of this motley
corporation have been "sited" with some de-
sign. Perhaps they are the property of a single
speculator. They stand around a "square,"
where, instead of lamp-posts or statues, may be
seen the decaying trunk of a cypress, or the
bushy form of a hackberry, rising out of a *lapis*
of trodden grass.

The Leona—at this point a mere rivulet—
glides past in the rear both of fort and village.
To the front extends a level plain, green as
verdure can make it—in the distance darkened
by a bordering of woods, in which post-oaks
and pecans, live oaks and elms, struggle for
existence with spinous plants of cactus and
anona; with scores of creepers, climbers, and
parasites almost unknown to the botanist. To
the south and east along the banks of the
river, you see scattered houses—the home-
steads of plantations; some of them rude and
of recent construction; with a few of more pre-
tentious style, and evidently of older origin.

One of these last particularly attracts the at-
tention: a structure of superior size—with flat
roof, surmounted by a crenelled parapet—whose
white walls show conspicuously against the
green background of forest with which it is
half encircled. It is the hacienda of Casa del
Corvo.

Turning your eye northward, you behold a
curious isolated eminence—a gigantic cone of
rocks, rising several hundred feet above the
level of the plain; and beyond, in dim distance,
a waving horizontal line indicating the outlines
of the Guadalupe mountains—the outstanding
spurs of that elevated and almost untrodden
plateau, the *Llano Estacado*.

Look aloft! You behold a sky, half-saph-
ire, half-turquoise; by day, showing no
other spot than the orb of its golden god; by
night studded with stars that appear clipped
from clear steel, and a moon whose well-de-
fined disk outlines the effulgence of silver.

Look below—at that hour when moon and
stars have disappeared, and the land-wind ar-
rives from Matagorda Bay, laden with the fra-
grance of flowers; when it strikes the starry
flag, unfolding it to the eye of the moon—then
look below, and behold the picture that should



"Spell it, Miss. It air sweet enuff 'ithout that sort o' doctorin'; 'specially arter ye hev looked inter the glass."

have been painted by the pencil of Vernet—too
varied and vivid, too plentiful in shapes, cos-
tumes and coloring, to be sketched by the pen.

In the tableau you distinguish soldiers in
uniform—the light blue of the United States
infantry, the darker cloth of the dragoons, and
the almost invisible green of the mounted rifle-
men.

You will see but few in full uniform—only
the officers of the day, the captain of the guard
and the guard itself.

Their comrades off duty lounge about the
barracks, or within the stockade inclosure, in
red-flannel shirts, slouch hats, and boots in-
nocent of blacking.

They mingle with men whose costumes make
no pretense to a military character: tall hun-
ters in tunics of dressed deer-skin, with leg-
gings to correspond—herdsmen and mustan-
gers, habited a la *Mexicaine*—Mexicans them-
selves, in wide *calzoneros*, *serapes* on their shoulders,
botas on their legs, huge spurs upon their
heels, and glazed *sombreros* set jauntily on their
crowns. They palaver with Indians on a
friendly visit to the fort, for trade or treaty;
whose tents stand at some distance, and from
whose shoulders hang blankets of red, and
green, and blue—giving them a picturesque,
even classical, appearance, in spite of the hide-
ous paint with which they have debauched their
skins, and the dirt that renders sticky their
long black hair, lengthened by tresses taken
from the tails of their horses.

Picture to the eye of your imagination this
jumble of mixed nationalities—in their varied
costumes of race, condition and calling; jot in
here and there a black-skinned scion of Ethio-
pia, the body-servant of some officer, or the
emissary of a planter from the adjacent settle-
ments; imagine them standing in gossiping
groups, or stalking over the level plain, amidst
some half-dozen halted wagons; a couple of
six-pounders upon their carriages, with caissons
close by; a square tent or two, with its sur-
rounding fly—occupied by some eccentric offi-
cer who prefers sleeping under canvas; a stack
of bayoneted rifles belonging to the soldiers on
guard—imagine all these component parts, and
you will have before your mind's eye a truthful
picture of a military fort upon the frontier of
Texas, and the extreme selvage of civilization.

About a week after the arrival of the Lou-
isiana planter at his new home, three officers
were seen standing upon the parade ground in
front of Fort Inge, with their eyes turned to-
ward the hacienda of Casa del Corvo.

They were all young men: the oldest not
over thirty years of age. His shoulder-straps
with the double bar proclaimed him a captain;
the second, with a single cross bar, was a first
lieutenant; while the youngest of the two,
with an empty chevron, was either a second
lieutenant or "brevet."

They were off duty; engaged in conversation
—their theme, the "new people" in Casa del
Corvo—by which was meant the Louisiana
planter and his family.

"A sort of housewarming it's to be," said
the infantry captain, alluding to an invitation
that had reached the fort, extending to all the
commissioned officers of the garrison. "Dinner
first, and dancing afterward—a regular
field day, where I suppose we shall see paraded
the aristocracy and beauty of the settlement."

"Aristocracy?" laughingly rejoined the lieuten-
ant of dragoons. "Not much of that here, I
fancy; and of beauty still less."

"You mistake, Hancock. There are both
upon the banks of the Leona; some good States'
families have strayed out this way. We'll
meet them at Poindexter's party, no doubt.
On the question of aristocracy, the host him-
self, if you'll pardon a poor joke, is himself a
host. He has enough of it to inoculate all the
company that may be present; and as for
beauty, I'll back his daughter against any

thing this side the Sabine. The commissary's
niece will be no longer belle about here."

"Oh, indeed?" drawled the lieutenant of
rifles, in a tone that told of his being chafed
by this representation. "Miss Poindexter must
be deuced good-looking, then."

"She's all that, I tell you, if she be any
thing like what she was when I last saw her,
which was at a Bayou Lafourche ball. There
were half a dozen Creoles there, who came
nigh crossing swords about her."

"A coquette, I suppose?" insinuated the
rifleman.

"Nothing of the kind, Crossman. Quite the
contrary, I assure you. She's a girl of spirit,
though—likely enough to snub any fellow who
might try to be too familiar. She's not with-
out some of the father's pride. It's a family
trait of the Poindexters."

"Just the girl I should cotton to," jocosely
remarked the young dragoon. "And if she's
as good-looking as you say, Captain Sloman, I
shall certainly go in for her. Unlike Crossman
here, I'm clear of all entanglements of the
heart. Thank the Lord for it!"

"Well, Mr. Hancock," rejoined the infantry
officer, a gentleman of sober inclinations, "I'm
not given to betting; but I'd lay a big wager
you won't say that after you have seen Louise
Poindexter—that is, if you speak your mind."

"Pshaw, Sloman! don't you be alarmed
about me. I've been too often under the fire
of bright eyes to have any fear of them."

"None so bright as hers."

"Deuce take it! you make a fellow fall in
love with this lady without having set eyes
upon her. She must be something extraordi-
nary—incomparable."

"She was both, when I last saw her."

"How long ago was that?"

"The Lafourche ball! Let me see—about
eighteen months. Just after we got back from
Mexico. She was then 'coming out,' as society
styles it."

"A new star in the firmament, to light and glory born."

"Eighteen months is a long time," sagely
remarked Crossman, "a long time for an unmar-
ried maiden—especially among Creoles, where
they often get spliced at twelve, instead of
'sweet sixteen.' Her beauty may have lost
some of its bloom."

"I believe not a bit. I should have called to
see; only I knew they were in the middle of
their 'plenshing,' and mightn't desire to be
visited. But the major has been to Casa del
Corvo, and brought back such a report about
Miss Poindexter's beauty as almost got him
into a scrape with the lady commanding the
post."

"Upon my soul, Captain Sloman!" assever-
ated the lieutenant of dragoons, "you've ex-
cited my curiosity to such a degree, I feel al-
ready half in love with Louise Poindexter."

"Before you get altogether into it," rejoined
the officer of infantry, in a serious tone, "let
me recommend a little caution. There's a *bete
noir* in the background."

"A brother, I suppose? That is the indivi-
dual so regarded."

"There is a brother, but it's not he. A free,
noble young fellow he is—the only Poindexter
I ever knew not eaten up with pride. He's
quite the reverse."

"The aristocratic father, then? Surely he
wouldn't object to a quartering with the Han-
cocks?"

"I'm not so sure of that; seeing that the
Hancocks are Yankees, and he's a *chivardie
Southernner*! But it's not old Poindexter I
mean."

"Who, then, is the black beast, or what is it
—if not a human?"

"It is human, after a fashion. A male cousin
—a queer card he is—by name Cassius Cal-
houn."

"I think I've heard the name."

"So have I," said the lieutenant of rifles.

"So has almost everybody who had any thing
to do with the Mexican war—that is, who took

part in Scott's campaign. He figured there ex-
tensively, and not very creditably, either. He
was captain in a volunteer regiment of Missis-
sippians—for he hails from that State; but he
was often met with at the *monte*-table than in
the quarters of his regiment. He had one or
two affairs, that gave him the reputation of a
bully. But that notoriety was not of Mexican
war origin. He had earned it before going
there; and was well known among the desper-
adoes of New Orleans as a *dangerous man*."

"What of all that?" asked the young dra-
goon, in a tone slightlyavoring of defiance.

"Who cares whether Mr. Cassius Calhoun be a
dangerous man, or a harmless one? Not I. He's
only the girl's cousin, you say?"

"Something more, perhaps. I have reason
to think he's her lover."

"Accepted, do you suppose?"

"That I can't tell. I only know, or suspect,
that he's the favorite of the father. I have
heard reasons why; given only in whispers, it
is true, but too probable to be scouted. The
old story—influence springing from mortgage
money. Poindexter's not so rich as he has
been—else we'd never have seen him out here."

"If the lady be so attractive as you say, I
suppose we'll have Captain Cassius out here
also before long?"

"Before long! Is that all you know about
it? He's here; came along with the family,
and is now residing with them. Some say he's
a partner in the planting speculation. I saw
him this very morning—down in the hotel bar-
room—'liquoring up,' and swaggering in his
old way."

"A swarthy-complexioned man of about
thirty, with dark hair and mustaches; wear-
ing a blue cloth frock, half military cut, and a
Colt's revolver strapped over his thigh?"

"Ay, and a bowie-knife, if you had looked
for it under the breast of his coat. That's
the man."

"He's rather a formidable-looking fellow,"
remarked the young rifleman. "If a bully, his
looks don't belie him."

"D—n his looks," half angrily exclaimed the
dragoon. "We don't hold commissions in
Uncle Sam's army to be scared by looks, nor
bullies either. If he comes any of his bullying
over me, he'll find I'm as quick with a trigger
as he."

At that moment the bugle brayed out the call
for morning parade—a ceremony observed at
the little frontier fort as regularly as if a whole
corps d'armee had been present—and the three
officers separating, betook themselves to their
quarters to prepare their several companies for
the inspection of the major in command of the
cantonment.

CHAPTER X.

CASA DEL CORVO.

This estate, or "hacienda," known as Casa
del Corvo, extended along the wooden bottom
of the Leona River for more than a league, and
twice that distance southward across the con-
tiguous prairie.

The house itself—usually, though not cor-
rectly, styled the *hacienda*—stood within long
cannon range of Fort Inge; from which its
white walls were partially visible; the remain-
ing portion being shadowed by tall forest trees
that skirted the banks of the stream.

Its site was peculiar, and no doubt chosen
with a view to defense: for its foundations
had been laid at a time when Indian assailants
might be expected; as indeed they might be,
and often are, at the present hour.

There was a curve of the river closing upon
itself, like a shoe of a race-horse, as the arc of
a circle, the parts complete; the chord of which,
or a parallelogram traced upon it, might be
taken as the ground-plan of the dwelling.
Hence the name—Casa del Corvo—"the House
of the Curve" (curved river).

The facade, or entrance side, fronted toward
the prairie—the latter forming a noble lawn

that extended to the edge of the horizon—in
comparison with which an imperial park would
have shrunk into the dimensions of a paddock.

The architecture of Casa del Corvo, like that
of other large country mansions in Mexico, was
of a style that might be termed *Morisco-Mexi-
can*: being a simple story in height, with a
flat roof—*azotea*—spouted and parapeted all
around; having a courtyard inside the walls,
termed *patio*, open to the sky, with a flagged
floor, a fountain, and a stone stairway leading
up to the roof; a grand entrance gateway—
the *saguán* with a massive wooden door, thickly
studded with bolt-heads; and two or three
windows on each side, defended by a *grille* of
strong iron bars, called *reja*. These are the
chief characteristics of a Mexican hacienda;
and Casa del Corvo differed but little from the
type almost universal throughout the vast ter-
ritories of Spanish America.

Such was the homestead that adorned the
newly-acquired estate of the Louisiana planter
—that had become his property by purchase.

As yet no change had taken place in the ex-
terior of the dwelling; not much in its interior,
if we except the *personnel* of its occupants. A
physiognomy, half Anglo-Saxon, half Franco-
American, presented itself in courtyard and
corridor, where formerly were seen only faces
of pure Spanish type; and instead of the rich,
sonorous language of Andalusia, was now
heard the harsher guttural of a semi-Teutonic
tongue—occasionally diversified by the sweet
accentuation of Creolian French.

Outside the walls of the mansion—in the
village-like cluster of Yucca-thatched huts
which formerly gave housing to the *peons* and
other dependants of the hacienda—the trans-
formation was more striking. Where the tall,
thin *cogero* in broad-brimmed hat of black
glaze, and checkered *serapes*, strode proudly
over the sward—his spurs tinkling at every
step—was now the authoritative "overseer,"
in blue jersey, or blanket-coat—his whip crack-
ing at every corner: where the red children of
Azteca and Anahuac, scantily clad in tanned
sheep-skin, could be seen, with sad, solemn as-
pect, lounging listlessly by their *jacales*, or trot-
ting silently along, were now heard the black
sons and daughters of Ethiopia, from morning
till night chattering their gay "gumbo," or
with song and dance seemingly contradicting
the idea that slavery is a heritage of unhap-
piness!

Was it a change for the better upon the es-
tate of Casa del Corvo?

There was a time when the people of Eng-
land would have answered—no; with a man-
imunity and emphasis calculated to drown all dis-
belief in their sincerity.

Alas, for human weakness and hypocrisy! Our
long cherished sympathy with the slave proves
to have been only a tissue of sheer delusibility.
Led by an oligarchy—not the true aristocracy
of our country; for these are too noble to have
yielded to such deep designing—but an oligar-
chy composed of conspiring plebs, who have
smuggled themselves into the first places of
power in all the four estates—guided by these
prurient conspirators against the people's rights
—England has proven untrue to her creed so
loudly proclaimed—true to the trust re-
posed in her by the universal acclaim of the
nations.

On a theme altogether different, dwell the
thoughts of Louise Poindexter, as she flung
herself into a chair in front of her dressing-
glass and directed her maid Florida to prepare
her for the reception of guests—expected soon
to arrive at the hacienda.

It was the day fixed for the "house-warm-
ing," and about an hour before the time ap-
pointed for dinner to be on the table. This
might have explained a certain restless-ness
observable in the air of the young Creole—espe-
cially observed by Florida; but it did not.
The maid had her own thoughts about the
cause of her mistress's disquietude—as was
proved by the conversation that ensued be-
tween them.

Scarce could it be called a conversation. It
was more as if the young lady were thinking
aloud, with her attendant acting as an echo.
During all her life, the Creole had been accus-
tomed to look upon her sable handmaid as a
thing from whom it was not worth while con-
cealing her thoughts, any more than she would
from the chairs, the table, the sofa, or any
other article of furniture in the apartment.
There was but the difference of Florida being
a little more animated and companionable, and
the advantage of her being able to give a vocal
response to the observations addressed to her.

For the first ten minutes after entering the
chamber, Florida had sustained the brunt of
the dialogue on indifferent topics—her mistress
only interfering with an occasional ejaculation.

"Oh, Miss Locey!" pursued the negress, as
her fingers fondly played among the lustrous
tresses of her young mistress's hair, "how
bewful you hair am! Like de long 'Panish
moss dat hang from de cypress-tree; only dat
it am ob a different color, an' shine like de
sugar-house 'lasses'."

As already stated, Louise Poindexter was a
Creole. After that, it is scarce necessary to say
that her hair was of dark color; and—as the
sable maid in rude speech had expressed it—
luxuriant as Spanish moss. It was not black;
but of a rich glowing brown—such as may be
observed in the tinting of a tortoise-shell, or
the coat of a winter-trapped sable.

"Ah!" continued Florida, spreading out an
immense "hank" of the hair, that glistened
like a chestnut against her dark palm, "if I
had dat lubby hair on ma head, in'tead ob dis
cuss'd cully wool, I fotch 'em all to ma feet—
ebbery one ob dem."

"What do you mean, girl?" inquired the
young lady, as if just aroused from some
dreamy reverie. "What's that you've been say-
ing? Fetch them to your feet? Fetch whom?"

"Na, now; you know what dis chile mean!"

"Pon honor, I do not."

"Make 'em lub me. Dat's what I should
hab say."

"But whom?"

"All the white gen'l'm'. De young planter, de officer ob de fort—all ob dem. Wif you hair, Miss Looney, I could dem all make con-
quess."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed the young lady, amused at the idea of Florida figuring under that magnificent cleavage. "You think, with my hair upon your head, you would be invincible among the men?"

"No, missa—not you! hair alone—but wif you sweet face—you skin, white as de alumbaster—you tall figga—you grand look. Oh, Miss Looney, you am so 'plendibly bew'ful! I hear de white gen'l'm' say so. I no need hear 'em say it. I see dat for mase'f."

"You're learning to flatter, Florida."

"No, 'deed, Missa—ne'er a word ob flattery—ne'er a word, I sw'a it. By de 'postles, I sw'a it."

To one who looked upon her mistress, the earnest asseveration of the maid was not necessary to prove the sincerity of her speech, however hyperbolic it might appear. To say that Louise Poindexter was beautiful would only be to repeat the universal verdict of the society that surrounded her. A single glance was sufficient to satisfy any one upon this point—strangers as well as acquaintances. It was a kind of beauty that needed no dissembling—and yet it is difficult to describe it. The pen can not portray such a face. Even the pencil could convey but a faint idea of it: for no painter, however skilled, could represent upon cold canvas the glowing, ethereal light that emanated from her eyes, and appeared to radiate over her countenance. Her features were purely classic: resembling those types of female beauty chosen by Phidias or Praxiteles. And yet in all the Grecian Pantheon there is no face to which it could have been likened: for it was not the countenance of a goddess, but, something more attractive to the eye of man, the face of a woman.

A suspicion of sensuality, apparent in the voluptuous curving of the lower lip—still more pronounced in the prominent rounding beneath the cheeks—while depriving the countenance of its pure spiritualism, did not perhaps detract from its beauty. There are men, who, in this departure from the divine type, would have perceived a superior charm: since in Louise Poindexter they would have seen not a divinity to be worshipped but a woman to be loved.

Her only reply vouchsafed to Florida's earnest asseveration was a laugh—careless, though not incredulous. The young Creole did not need to be reminded of her beauty. She was not unconscious of it: as could be told by her taking more than one long look into the mirror before which her toilet was being made. The flattery of the negroess seemed called up emotion, certainly not more than she might have felt at the fawning of a pet spaniel; and she soon after surrendered herself to the reverie from which the speech had aroused her.

Florida was not silenced by observing her mistress' air of abstraction. The girl had evidently something on her mind—some mystery, of which she desired the *elucidation*—and was determined to have it.

"Ah!" she continued, as if talking to herself: "if Florida had half de charm ob young missa, she for nobody care—she for nobody heave de deep sigh!"

"Sigh!" repeated her mistress, suddenly startled by the speech. "What do you mean by that?"

"Pa' dieu, Miss Looney, Florida no so blind you tink; nor so deaf neither. She you see long time sit in de same place; y'er nebb'er 'peak no word—you only heave de sigh—de long, deep sigh. You heave dat in de plantashun in Loosyanny?"

"Florida! I fear you are taking leave of your senses, or have left them behind you in Louisiana? Perhaps there's something in the climate here that affects you. Is that so, girl?"

"Pa' dieu, Miss Looney, dat question ob yourself ask. You no be angry 'cause I 'peak so plain. Florida you slave—she you lub like brack sissar. She no happy hear you sigh. Dat why she lub take de freedom. You no be angry wif me?"

"Certainly not. Why should I be angry with you, child? I'm not. I didn't say I was; only you are quite mistaken in your ideas. What you've seen or heard could be only a fancy of your own. As for sighing, heigho! I have something else to think of just now. I have to entertain about a hundred guests—nearly all strangers, too; among them the young planters and officers whom you would enquire if you had my hair. Ha! ha! ha! I don't desire to enmesh them—not one of them! So twist it up as you like—without the semblance of a snare in it."

"Oh, Miss Looney! you so 'peak?" inquired the negroess with an air of evident interest. "You say none ob dem gen'l'm' you care for? Dere am two, free, berry, berry, berry, ha' som'. One planter dar be, an' two ob de officer—all young gen'l'm'. You know de free I mean. All ob dem hab been 'tentive to you. You sure, missa, 'tain't one ob dem dat you make sigh?"

"Sigh again! Ha! ha! ha! But come, Florida, we're losing time. Recollect I've got to be in the drawing-room to receive a hundred guests. I must have at least half an hour to compose myself into an attitude befitting such an extensive reception."

"No fear, Miss Looney—no fear. I you toilette make in time—plenty ob time. No much trouble you dress. Pa' dieu, in any dress you look 'plendibly. You be de belle if you dress like one ob de fief hand ob de plantashun."

"What a flatterer you are grown, Florida! I shall begin to suspect that you're after some favor. Do you wish me to intercede, and make up your quarrel with Pluto?"

"No, missa, I be friend nebb'er more wif Pluto. He show hisself such great coward when come dat storm on de brack prairie. Ah, Miss Looney! what we boaf ob if dat young white gen'l'm' on de red hoss no com ridin' dat way?"

"If he had not, *chere* Florida, it is highly probable neither of us would now have been here."

"Oh, missa, wasn't he real fancy man, dat 'ere? You see him bew'ful face. You see him thick hair, jess de color ob you own—only curled little bit like mine. Talk ob de young planter, or dem officer at de fort! De brack folk say he no good for nuffin, like dem—he only poor white trash. Who care fo' dat? He am order for a bit o' palaver I wants to hev wif y'ur father 'bout dat ere spotted mowstanger."

Up to this point the young Creole had preserved a certain tranquillity of countenance. She tried to continue it, but the effort failed her. Whether by accident or design, Florida had touched the most sensitive chord in the spirit of her mistress.

She would have been loth to confess it, even to her slave; and it was a relief to her, when loud voices heard in the courtyard gave a colorable excuse for terminating her toilette, along with the delicate dialogue upon which she might have been constrained to enter.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

"Say, ye duratoned nigger! whar's your master?"

"Mass' Poindexter, sar? De ole mass', or de youn'un?"

"Young'un be durned! I mean Mister Poindexter. Who else shed it? Whar air he?"

"Ho—ho! sar, dey am boaf at de house—de ole mass', an' de young Mass' Henry. Dey am down de ribber, wha de folk am makin' de new fence. Ho! ho! you find 'em dar?"

"Down the river! How fur d'ye reck'n?"

"Ho! ho! sar. Dis nigger reck'n it be 'bout 'ree or four mile—dat at de berry leas'."

"Three or four mile? Ye must be a duratoned fool, nigger. Mister Poindexter's plantation don't get fur; an' I reck'n he ain't de man to be makin' fence on some dy' else's clarin'."

"Look hyur! What time air he expectin' to cum? You've got a straighter idee o' t'et, I hope?"

"Dey boaf, 'pected home berry soon, de young mass' an' de ole mass', and Mass' Calhoun, too. Ho! ho! dar's agwine to be big doin's bout dis yer shanty—yer see dat fo' ye—seff by de smell ob de kitchen. Ho! ho! All sorts o' gran' feasin'—de roas' an' de bile, an' de barbeque, de pot-pies, an' de chicken fixin's. Ho! ho! an' dey agwine to go it hyar jess like de ole times on de coas ob de Mississippi. Hoorah fo' ole Mass' Poindexter! he de right sort. Ho! ho! tranger! why you no holla too: you no frien' ob de mass'?"

"Durn you, nigger, don't ye remember me? Now I look into y'ur ugly mug, I recollect you."

"Gorramighty! 'tain't Mass' Tump—'t use to fotch de ven'son an' de turkey gobbler to de plantashun? By de jumbo, it am, tho'. Law, Mass' Tump, dis nigger 'members you like it wa'! He day afore yessay, I see him—de ole called de odder day; but I war away from 'bout de place. I'm de coachman now—dribes de carriage dat carries de lady ob de 'tablishment—de bew'ful Missy Loo. Lor', mass', she berry fine gal. Dey do say she beat Florinda in fits. Nebba mind, Mass' Tump, you better wait till ole mass' come home. He am a bound to be hye, in de shortest possible time."

"Wal, if t'et's so, I'll wait upon him," rejoined the hunter, leisurely lifting his leg over the saddle and whirling up to the time, he heeded his seat. "Now, ole fellow," he added, passing the bridle into the hands of the negro, "you g'le the mair a dozen 'yers o' corn out o' the crib. I've rid de critter better'n a score o' miles like a streak o' lightning, all to do your master a service."

"Oh, Mr. Zehulon Stump, is it you?" exclaimed a silvery voice, followed by the appearance of Louise Poindexter upon the veranda.

"I thought it was," continued the young lady, coming up to the railings, "though I recollect you used to be partial to Monaghan's hella whiskey. I think there is some. Florida, see if there be! Step into the veranda, dear Mr. Stump, and take a seat. You were inquiring for papa? I expect him home every minute. I shall try to entertain you till he comes."

Had the young lady paused sooner in her speech, she would not have received an immediate reply. Even as it was, some seconds elapsed before Zeb made rejoinder. He stood gazing upon her, as if struck speechless by the sheer intensity of her admiring gaze.

"Lord o' mercy, Miss Lewaze," he at length gasped forth, "I thort when I used to see you on the Mississippi, ye war the puttiest critter on the air; but now, I think you the puttiest thing eyther on air or in hevving. Geehosofat!"

The old hunter's praise was scarce exaggerated. Fresh from the toilette, the gloss of her luxuriant hair untarnished by the action of the atmosphere, her cheeks glowing with a carmine tint, produced by the application of cold water; her fine figure, gracefully draped in a robe of India muslin, white and semi-transparent—certainly did Louise Poindexter appear as pretty as any thing upon earth—if not in heaven.

"Geehosofat!" again exclaimed the hunter, following up his complimentary speech, "I hev in my time seed what I thort war some putty critters of the sheemede kind—my ole 'coman herself war't so 'had lookin' when I fust kin across her in Kaintuck—t'et she war't. But I will say this, Miss Lewaze: of de puttiest bits o' all o' them war clipped out an' then joined thegither ag'in, they w'd'n't make up the thousandth part of an angel such as you."

"Oh, oh, oh! Mr. Stump—Mr. Stump! I'm astonished to hear you talk in this manner. Texas has quite turned you into a courtier. If you go on so, I fear you will lose your character for plain speaking! After that I am sure you will stand in need of a very big drink. Haste, Florida! I think you said you would prefer whiskey?"

"Ef I didn't say it I think it; and that air about the same. Y'ur right, Miss, I prefer the corn afore any o' them furrin lickens; an' I sticks to it whurver I kin git it. Texas hain't made no alterashun in me in the matter o' lickin' erin."

"Mass' Tump, you it hab mix wif water?" inquired Florida, coming forward with a tumbler about one-half full of Monaghan's hella whiskey.

"No, gurl. Durn ye water! I hev had enuff o' t'et since I started this mornin'. I hain't had a taste o' lickin' de hul day—ne'er as much as the smell o' it."

"Dear Mr. Stump! surely you can't drink it that way? Why, it will burn your throat! Have a little sugar or honey along with it?"

"Speil it, Miss. It air sweet enuff 'thout dat sort o' docterin'; specially arter you hev looked inter the glass. Y'all see ef I can't drink it. Hyur goes to try."

The old hunter raised the tumbler to his chin, and after giving three gulps, and the fraction of a fourth, returned it empty into the hands of Florida. A loud smacking of the lips almost drowned the simultaneous exclamations of astonishment uttered by the young lady and her maid.

"Bura my throat, ye say? Ne'er a bit. It hez jess eiled dat ere jewegular, an' put it in order for a bit o' palaver I wants to hev wif y'ur father 'bout dat ere spotted mowstanger."

"Oh, true! I had forgotten. No, I hadn't either, but I did not suppose you had time to have news of it. Have you heard any thing of the pretty creature?"

"Putty critter ye may well pronounce it. It ur all o' t'et. Besides it ur a mair."

"A mair! What's that, Mr. Stump? I don't understand."

"A mair I sayed, Surely ye know what a mair is?"

"Ma-a-a—ma-a-r! Why, no, not exactly. Is it a Mexican word? *Mar* in Spanish signifies the sea."

"In course it air a Mixikin mair—all mowstangers air. They air all on 'em o' a breed as war once brought over from some European country by the fust o' them as settled in these hyur parts—leesewise I hev heern so."

"Still, Mr. Stump, I do not comprehend you. What makes this mowstanger a m-a-a-r?"

"What makes her a mair? Case she ain't a hoss; t'et's what makes it, Miss Poindexter."

"Oh—now—I think I comprehend. But did you say you have heard of the animal—I mean since you left us?"

"Heern o' her, sec'd her, an' feel'd her."

"Indeed?"

"She air grapped."

"Ah, caught! what capital news! I shall be so delighted to see the beautiful thing; and ride it too. I haven't had a horse worth a piece of orange-peel since I've been in Texas. Papa has promised to purchase this one for me at any price. But who is the lucky individual who accomplished the capture?"

"Ye mean who grapped the mair?"

"Yes, yes—who?"

"Why, in course it war a mowstanger."

"A mowstanger?"

"Ye-es—an' such a one as thur ain't nothar in all these purayras—eyther to ride a hoss or throw a larytt over one. Ye may talk about y'ur Mexikins! I never seed neery Mexikin ked manage hoss-doin's like dat young fellur; an' thur ain't a drop o' thur pisen blood in his veins. He ur es white es I am myself."

"His name?"

"Wal, es to the name o' his family, that I never heern. His christyun name air Maurice. He's knowed up thur 'bout the fort as Maurice the Mustang."

The old hunter was not sufficiently observant to take note of the tone of eager interest in which the question had been asked, nor the sudden deepening of color upon the cheeks of the questioner as she heard the answer.

Florida had escaped the observation of Florida.

"La, Miss Looney!" exclaimed the latter, "shoo dat de name ob de brave young white gen'l'm—he dat us save from being smothered on de brack prairie?"

"Geehosofat, yes!" resumed the hunter, relieving the young lady from the necessity of making reply. "Now I think o't, he told me o't the suckumstance this very mornin', afore we started. He air the same. T'et's the very thing I want to hear. He air the same. T'et's the critter along at this eyedential mornin' in kump'ny wif about a dozen others o' the same cayvud. He oughter be hyur afore sundown. I pushed my ole mair ahead so's to tell y'ur father the spotty war comin', and let him git the fust chance o' buyin'. I knowed as how t'et ere bit o' hoss-doin's don't get dur fur into the settlements afore someb'dy snaps her up. I thort o' you, Miss Lewaze, and how ye talk on so when I tolt ye 'bout the critter. Wal, make y'ur mind easy, ye shall hev the fust chance. Ole Zeb Stump, 'll be y'ur bail for t'et."

"Oh, Mr. Stump, it is so kind of you! I am very, very grateful. You will now excuse me for a moment. Father will soon be back. We have a dinner-party to-day, and I have to prepare for receiving a great many people. Florida, see that Mr. Stump's luncheon is set out for him. Go, girl—go at once about it!"

"And, Mr. Stump," continued the young lady, drawing nearer to the hunter, and speaking in a more subdued tone of voice, "if the young gentleman should arrive while the other people are here—perhaps he don't know them—will you see that he is not neglected? There is wine yonder, in the veranda, and other things. You know what I mean, dear Mr. Stump?"

"Durned if I do, Miss Lewaze; that air, not adzackly. I kin unnerstan' all t'et 'ere 'bout the lickin' an' other fixin's. But who air the young gen'l'man y'ur speakin' o'? T'et's the thing as amboozles me."

"Surely you know who I mean? The young gentleman—the young man who, you say, is bringing in the horses."

"Oh! ah! Maurice the mowstanger! That's it, it is? Wal, I reck'n y'ur not a hundred mile astray in calling him a gen'l'man; tho' it ain't offener a mowstanger gits t'et entitlement, or deserves it, eyther. He air one, every inch o' him—a gen'l'man by birth, breed, an' raisin'—tho' he air a hoss-hunter, an' Irish at t'et."

The eyes of Louise Poindexter sparkled so perfectly in unison with her own.

"I must tell ye, howsoever," continued the hunter, as if some doubt had come across his mind, "it won't do to show that ye're young feller any sort o' second-hand hospitality. As they used to say on the Mississippi, he air 'as proud as a Peindexter. Excuse me, Miss Lewaze, for lettin' the word slip. I didn't mean to say nothin' but the puttiest o' the name."

"Oh, Mr. Stump! You can say what you please to me. You know that I could not be offended with you, you dear old giant!"

"He'd be meaner than a dwarf es ked eyther say or do any thing to offend you, Miss."

"Thanks! thanks! I know your honest heart—I know your devotion. Perhaps some time—some time, Mr. Stump—she spoke hesitatingly, but apparently without any definite meaning—"I might stand in need of your friendship."

"Ye won't need it long afore ye git it, then; t'et ole Zeb Stump kin promise ye, Miss Poindexter. He'd be stinkin' than a skunk, an' a bigger coward than a coyote, es wouldn't stan' by sech as you, while there war a bottle full o' breath left in the inside o' his body."

"A thousand thanks—again and again! But what were you going to say? You spoke of second-hand hospitality?"

"I did."

"I meant t'et it 'ud be no use o' my invitin' Maurice the mowstanger eyther to eat or to drink under this hyur roof. Unless y'ur father do dat, the young fellur 'll go 'thout tasin'."

You unnerstan, Miss Lewaze, he ain't one o' t'et sort o' poor whites as kin be sent around to the kitchen."

The young Creole stood for a second or two without making rejoinder.

She appeared to be occupied with some abstract calculation, that engrossed the whole of her thoughts.

"Never mind about it," she at length said, in a tone that told the calculation completed.

"Never mind, Mr. Stump. You need not invite him. Only let me know when he arrives unless we be at dinner, and then, of course, he would not expect any one to appear. But if he should come at that time, you detain him—won't you?"

"Boun't to do it, ef you bid me."

"You will, then; and let me know he is here. I shall ask him to eat."

"Ef ye do, Miss, I reck'n ye'll speil his appetite. The sight o' you, to say nothin' o' listenin' to y'ur melody voice, 'ud cure a starvin' wolf o' bein' hungry. When I kin hyur I war peckish enuf to swaller a raw buzzard. Neow I don't care a durn about eatin'. I ked go 'thout chawin' meat for a month."

As this exaggerated chapter of euphemism was responded to by a peal of clear, ringing laughter, the young lady pointed on the other side of the patio; where her maid was seen emerging from the cocina, carrying a light tray—followed by Pluto with one of broader dimensions, more heavily weighted.

"You great giant!" was the reply, given in a tone of sham reproach; "I won't believe you

have lost your appetite, until you have eaten Jach. Yonder come Pluto and Florida.

They bring something that will prove more cheerful company than I, so I shall leave you to enjoy it. Good-by, Zeb—good-by, or, as the natives say here, *Hasta luego!*"

Gaily were these words spoken—lightly did Louise Poindexter trip back across the covered corridor. Only after entering her chamber, and finding herself *chez soi*, did she give way to a reflection of a more serious character, that found expression in words low murmured, but full of mystic meaning:

"It is my destiny: I feel—I know that it is! I dare not meet, and yet I can not shun it—I may not—I would not—I *will* not!"

CHAPTER XII.

TAMING A WILD MARE.

THE pleasantest apartment in a Mexican house is that which has the roof for its floor, and the sky for its ceiling—the *azotea*. In fine weather—ever fine in that sunny climate—it is preferred to the drawing-room: especially after dinner, when the sun begins to cast rose-colored rays upon the snow-clad summits of Orizava, Popocatepetl, and the "Twin-Sisters," when the rich wines of Xeres and Madeira have warmed the imaginations of Andalusian's sons and daughters—descendants of the Conquistadores—who mount up to their house-tops to look upon a land of world-wide renown, rendered famous by the heroic achievements of their ancestors.

Then does the Mexican "cavallero," clad in embroidered habiliments, exhibit his splendid exterior to the eyes of some senorita—at the same time puffing the smoke of his paper cigarito against her cheeks. Then does the dark-eyed doncella favorably listen to soft whisperings: or perhaps only pretends to listen, while, with heart distraught, and eye wandering away, she sends stealthy glances over the plain toward some distant hacienda—the home of him she truly loves.

So enjoyable a fashion, as that of spending the twilight hours upon the housetop, could not fail to be followed by any one who chanced to be the occupant of a Mexican dwelling; and the family of the Louisiana planter had adopted it, as a matter of course.

On that same evening, after the dining-hall had been deserted, the roof, instead of the drawing-room, was chosen as the place of re-assemblage; and as the sun descended toward the horizon, his slanting rays fell upon a throng as gay, as cheerful, and perhaps as resplendent, as ever trod the azotea of Casa del Corvo. Moving about over its tessellated tiles, standing in scattered groups, or lined along the parapet with faces turned toward the plain, were women as fair and men as brave as had assembled on that same spot—even when its ancient owner used to distribute hospitality to the *hidalgos* of the land—the *huest* blood in Coahuila and Texas.

The company now collected to welcome the advent of Woodley Poindexter on his Texan estate could also boast of this last distinction. They were the *elite* of the settlements—not only of the Leona, but of others more distant. There were guests from Gonzales, from Corroville, and even from San Antonio—old friends of the planter, who, like him, had sought a home in South-western Texas, and who had ridden—some of them over a hundred miles—to be present at this, his first grand "reception."

The planter had spared neither pains nor expense to give it *elate*. What with the sprinkling of uniform and epaulettes, supplied by the fort—what with the brass band borrowed from the same convenient repository—what with the choice wines found in the cellars of Casa del Corvo, and which had formed part of the purchase—there could be little lacking to make Poindexter's party the most brilliant ever given upon the banks of the Leona.

And to insure this effect, his lovely daughter, Louise, late belle of Louisiana—the fame of whose beauty had been before her, even in Texas—acted as mistress of the ceremonies—moving about among the admiring guests with the smile of a queen and the grace of a goddess.

On that occasion was she the eyenose of a hundred pairs of eyes, the happiness of a score of hearts, and perhaps the torture of as many more: for not all were blessed who beheld her beauty.

Was she herself happy?

The interrogatory may appear singular—almost absurd. Surrounded by friends—admirers—one, at least, who adored her—a dozen whose impatient love could but end in adoration—young planters, lawyers, cultured statesmen, and some with reputation already achieved—sons of Mars in armor, or with armor late laid aside—how could she be otherwise than proudly, supremely happy?

A stranger might have asked the question; one superficially acquainted with Creole character—more especially the character of the lady in question.

But mingling in that splendid throng was a man who was no stranger to either; and who, perhaps, more than any one present, watched her every movement; and endeavored more than any other to interpret its meaning. Cassius Calhoun was the individual thus occupied. She went not bither, nor thither, without his following her—not close, like a shadow; but by stealth, flitting from place to place; up-stairs and down-stairs; standing in corners, with an air of apparent abstraction; but all the while with eyes turned askant upon his cousin's face, like a plain-clothes policeman employed on detective duty.

Strangely enough he did not seem to pay much regard to her speeches made in reply to the compliments showered upon her by several would-be winners of a smile—not even when these were conspicuous and respectable, as in the case of young Hancock of the dragoons. To all such he listened without visible emotion, as one listens to a conversation in no way affecting the affairs either of self or friends.

It was only after ascending to the azotea, on observing his cousin near the parapet, with her eye turned interrogatively toward the plain, that his detective zeal became conspicuous—so much so as to attract the notice of others. More than once was it noticed by those standing near: for more than once was repeated the act which gave cause to it.

At intervals, not very wide apart, the young mistress of Casa del Corvo might have been seen to approach the parapet, and look across the plain, with a glance that seemed to interrogate the horizon of the sky.

Why she did so no one could tell. No one presumed to conjecture, except Cassius Calhoun. He had thoughts upon the subject—thoughts that were torturing him.

When a group of moving forms appeared upon the prairie, emerging from the garish light of the setting sun—when the spectators upon the azotea pronounced it a drove of horses in charge of some mounted men—the ex-officer of volunteers had a suspicion as to who was conducting that *cavallada*.

Another appeared to feel an equal interest in its advent, though, perhaps, from a different motive. Long before the horse-drove had attracted the observation of Poindexter's guests, his daughter had noted its approach—from the time that a cloud of dust soared up against the horizon, so slight and filmy as to have escaped

detection by any eye not bent expressly on discovering it.

From that moment the young Creole, under cover of conversation carried on amid a circle of fair companions, had been slyly scanning the dust-cloud as it drew nearer; forming conjectures as to what was causing it, upon knowledge already, and as she supposed, exclusively her own.

"Wild horses!" announced the major commandant of Fort Inge, after a short inspection through his pocket-telescope. "Some one bringing them in," he added, a second time raising the glass to his eye. "Oh! I see now—it's Maurice, the mowstanger who occasionally helps our men to a remount. He appears to be coming this way—direct to your place, Mr. Poindexter."

"If it be the young fellow you have named, that's not unlikely," replied the owner of Casa del Corvo. "I bargained with him to catch me a score or two, and maybe this is the first installment he's bringing me."

"Yes, I think it is," he added, after a look through the telescope.

"I am sure of it," said the planter's son. "I can tell the horseman yonder to be Maurice Gerald."

The planter's daughter could have done the same; though she made no display of her knowledge. She did not appear to be much interested in the matter—indeed, rather indifferent. She had become aware of being watched by that evil eye constantly burning upon her.

The *cavallada* came up, Maurice sitting handsomely on his horse, with the spotted mare at the end of his lazo.

"What a beautiful creature!" exclaimed several voices, as the captured mustang was led up in front of the house, quivering with excitement at a scene so new to it.

"It's worth a journey to the ground to look at such an animal!" suggested the major's wife, a lady of enthusiastic inclinations.

"I propose we all go down! What say you, Miss Poindexter?"

"Oh, certainly," answered the mistress of the mansion, amidst a chorus of other voices crying:—

"Let us go down! Let us go down!"

"Thanks, gentlemen—thanks!" said the mustanger, with a patronizing look toward men who believed themselves to be his masters. "This mustang is my luckpenny; and if Miss Poindexter will condescend to accept of it, I shall feel more than repaid for the three-days' chase which the creature has cost me. Had she been the most cruel of coquettes, she could scarce have been more difficult to subdue."

"I accept your gift, sir; and with gratitude," responded the young Creole—for the first time proclaiming herself, and stepping freely forth as she spoke. "But I have a fancy," she continued, pointing to the mustanger at the same time that her eye rested inquiringly on the countenance of the mustanger—"a fancy that your captive is not yet tamed? She but trembles in fear of the unknown future. She may yet kick against the traces, if she finds the harness not to her liking; and then what am I to do?—poor I?"

"True, Maurice!" said the major, widely mistaken as to the meaning of the mysterious speech, and addressing the only man on the ground who could possibly have comprehended it; Miss Poindexter speaks very sensibly. That mustang has not been tamed yet—any one may see it. Come, my good fellow! give her the lesson."

"Ladies and gentlemen!" continued the major, turning toward the company, "this is something worth your seeing—those of you who have not witnessed the spectacle before. Come, Maurice, mount and show us a specimen of prairie horsemanship. She looks as though she would put your skill to the test."

"You are right, major; she does!" replied the mustanger, with a quick glance, directed, not toward the captive quadruped, but to the young Creole, who, with all her assumed courage, retired tremblingly behind the circle of spectators.

"No matter, my man," pursued the major, in a tone intended for encouragement. "In spite of that devil sparkling in her eye, I'll lay ten to one you'll take the conceit out of her. Try!"

Without losing credit, the mustanger could not have declined according to the major's request. It was a challenge to skill—a equestrian prowess—a thing not lightly esteemed upon the prairies of Texas.

He proclaimed his acceptance of it by leaping lightly out of his saddle, resigning his own steed to Zeb Stump, and exclusively giving his attention to the captive.

The only preliminary called for was the clearing of the ground. This was effected in an instant, the greater part of the company, with all the ladies, returning to the azotea.

With only a piece of raw-hide rope looped around the under jaw, and carried headstall fashion behind the ears—with only one rein in hand—Maurice sprang to the back of the wild man.

It was the first time she had ever been mounted by man—the first insult of the kind offered to her.

A shrill, spiteful scream spoke plainly her appreciation of and determination to resent it. It proclaimed defiance of the attempt to degrade her to the condition of a slave!

With equine instinct, she reared upon her hind legs, for some seconds balancing her body in an erect position. Her rider, anticipating the trick, had thrown his arms around her neck; and close clasping her throat, appeared part of herself. But for this she might have poised over upon her back, and crushed him beneath her.

The uprearing of the hind quarters was the next trick of the mustanger—sure of being tried, and most difficult for the rider to meet without being thrown. From sheer conceit in his skill, he had declined saddle and stirrup, that would have stood him instead; but with these he could not have claimed accomplishment of the boasted feat of the prairies—to tame the naked steed.

He performed it without them. As the mare raised her hind quarters aloft, he turned quickly upon her back, threw his arms around the barrel of her body, and resting his toes upon the angular points of her shoulders, successfully resisted her efforts to unhorse him. Twice or three times was the endeavor repeated by the mustanger; and then, as if conscious that such efforts were idle, the enraged animal placated no longer; but, springing away from the spot, entered upon a gallop that appeared to have no goal this side the ending of the earth.

It must have come to an end somewhere; though not within sight of the spectators, who kept their places, waiting for the horse-tamer's return.

Conjectures that he might be killed, or, at the least, badly "crippled," were freely ventured during his absence; and there was one who wished it so. But there was also one upon whom such an event would have produced a painful impression—almost as painful as if her own life depended upon his safe return. Why Louise Poindexter, daughter of the proud Louisiana sugar-planter—a belle—a beauty of more than provincial repute—who could, by simply saying yes, have had for a husband the richest and noblest in the land—why she should have fixed her fancy, or even permitted her thoughts to stray upon a poor horse-hunter of Texas, was a mystery that even her own intellect—by no means a weak one—was unable to fathom.

Perhaps she had not gone so far as to fix her fancy upon him. She did not think so herself. Had she thought so, and reflected upon it, perhaps she would have recoiled from the contemplation of certain consequences, that could not have failed to present themselves to her mind.

She was but conscious of having conceived some strange interest in a strange individual—one who had presented himself in a fashion that favored fanciful reflections—one who differed essentially from the commonplace types introduced to her in the world of social distinctions.

She was conscious, too, that this interest—originating in a word, a glance, a gesture—listened to or observed amid the ashes of a burnt prairie—instead of subsiding, had ever since been upon the increase!

It was not diminished when Maurice the mustanger came riding back across the plain, with the wild mare between his legs—no more wild, no longer trying to destroy him, but with lowered crest and mien submissive, acknowledging to all the world that she had found her master!

Without acknowledging it to the world, or even to herself, the young Creole was inspired with a similar reflection.

"Miss Poindexter," said the mustanger, gliding to the ground, and without making an acknowledgment to the plaudits that were showered upon him, "may I ask you to step up to her, throw this lasso over her neck, and lead her to the stable? By so doing she will regard you as her tamer; and ever after submit to your will, if you but exhibit the sign that first deprived her of her liberty."

A pride would have paltered with the proposal, a coquette would have declined it—a timid girl would have shrunk back.

Not so Louise Poindexter—a descendant

of one of the filles a la cassette. Without a moment's hesitation—without the slightest show of prudery or fear—she stepped forth from the aristocratic circle; as instructed, took hold of the horsehair rope; whisked it across the neck of the tamed mustanger and led the captive off toward the caballeria of Casa del Corvo.

As she did so, the mustanger's words were ringing in her ears, and echoing through her heart with a strange foreboding weird significance.

"She will regard you as her tamer, and ever after submit to your will, if you but exhibit the sign that first deprived her of her liberty."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 205.)

ONE-ARMED ALF, The Giant Hunter of the Great Lakes; OR, THE MAID OF MICHIGAN.

A ROMANCE OF THE WAR OF 1812.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "DEATH-NOTCH," "BOY-SPY," "SOLD SOLDIER,"
"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.
A STORMY INTERVIEW.

The fall of Mackinaw and the occupation of northern Michigan by the English forces was followed by the advance of the British army under General Brock upon Detroit, where Hull, with the American forces, was posted. With the English army proper, however, our story has nothing in particular to do; but one incident connected with our romance compels us to call the attention of the reader to the headquarters of General Brock while he was encamped with his army on the peninsula near the old French fort, hitherto mentioned.

In the tent of the British commander, on the morning of the escape of Captain Philip St. John and old Jack Eller from the power of the Indians, two persons were seated engaged in conversation. One of these persons was an Englishman wearing the clothes of a civilian, the other was an American dressed in the uniform of a captain of the American army.

The latter, it was easy to be seen, was a prisoner, although he was not bound, but two soldiers kept guard outside of the tent.

The Englishman was a man of about forty years, and possessed features that were hard and cruel, and even repulsive in those outward signs that told of a life of wickedness and dissipation.

With this man we have met before. It was Sir Joshua Pellington, and the young prisoner before him was none other than our young friend, Captain Philip St. John, who had unfortunately fallen into the power of the advance guard of the English army soon after his escape from the Indians.

Why these two were closeted in Brock's tent alone, we will let the run of their conversation tell, omitting the preliminaries and question which led to this reply from young St. John:

"It is no use talking, Pellington; you can not force me to submit to your desires in this matter. I prefer death to such a villainous deed. Three years ago at Montreal you harassed my life almost out of me to marry my cousin, Maria Bradbury, in order to unite the estates of the Imbercourts and Lessingfords, which I solemnly believe you intended to make yourself owner of at once. But I objected to such a course then, for two reasons: one was, Maria was married to a man she loved, Walter Garfield, and the other, because I loved another."

"Yes," sneered the haughty, relentless villain, Sir Joshua, "you loved and were engaged to a low-born, plebeian American girl—one Hellice Arvine, whom I have taken the precaution to put out of your way."

The young captain sprang to his feet as the villain spoke, and the fire that gleamed in his eyes completely covered the English bully, who, endeavoring to affect a cool indifference with poor success, replied:

"Sit down, Robert Imbercourt, and let us have one talk without quarreling. You should remember that I am your mother's brother, and by virtue of her will and the laws of England, your guardian."

"I care not for our relationship, sir," retorted St. John; "it will be no barrier between my fist and your crime-marked face if you speak disrespectful of Hellice Arvine again, now mind."

"We will have no further words on that score, Robert," said Pellington, "but let me inform you that the influence I have with General Brock is all that will save your life as a deserter."

"I am not a deserter, sir, and I scorn your influence. I am no longer a subject of the British crown, but an American. I have discarded the name of Imbercourt because the blood of the Pellingtons is in the family; and as to my English fortune, I shall have nothing to do with it, for it has already entailed a curse upon many. And as my guardian you may consider yourself discharged. I am able to look after my own welfare; it is your own vile, wicked and selfish interests you have been working after, not mine, nor the Bradburys."

"I am not speaking of the Bradburys at all, Robert, for as I said before, they were all murdered—Maria and her husband, and her two brothers, Charles and Amos."

"Yes, and who murdered them?" St. John asked, fixing a stern, desperate look upon the villain.

"Why, as I told you, a band of Indians and English renegades."

"And by your instigation, too, was the murder committed! I heard your arrangements for the deed with one Major Mackelogan, that same night that we met in Montreal!"

Sir Joshua turned ghastly pale, and for a moment it seemed as though he would be unable to maintain his seat.

"Robert," he finally gasped, "you are fast growing into a hot-headed, impulsive Yankee."

"Better that than an English assassin," said St. John, "and I have no quarrel with you."

"It is no use talking to you, Robert Imbercourt," he said, evasively.

"I am not Robert Imbercourt, but Philip St. John," interrupted the young man, "and I glory in the commission of a captain of the American army, given me by President Madison."

"That commission may prove your death-warrant too, impulsive boy. Had you married your cousin three years ago, as I wanted you to—"

"Yes," again interrupted the captain, "then our inheritance would have been as one, and by one sweep of your murderous knife, you would have been immensely rich."

Sir Joshua ground his teeth with a rage he dare not express openly, for at heart he was a base coward.

"Laying aside all war of words and taunts, Robert," he finally said, "let me inquire how

you knew Maria was married at the time I saw you at Montreal, three years ago? You told me then that you had never seen her nor either of her brothers."

"I say so yet. I never saw the Bradburys in my life, but I learned through a friend that Maria was married to one Walter Garfield, and so I wrote forthwith to her of your proposition to me and warned her of the damnable plot you and Mackelogan had concocted for her murder, which you finally carried out by killing the whole family."

"Do you know Darcy Mayfield of Point Michigan?" the villain coolly asked.

"I have seen him; but what designs can you have against his life?" was the cutting response.

"None at all, my dear nephew; I have heard that he is Maria's husband, Walter Garfield."

This was really news to the captain, but it let in a ray of light upon a matter over which he had pondered a great deal. His thoughts went back to the cabin of One-Armed Alf. He recalled the demand of Long Run for Darcy Mayfield's surrender, and the conviction was at once forced upon him that Long Run was acting in accordance with the wish of Sir Joshua himself. He recalled the fact of Darcy's silent demeanor, and the deep, troubled look that his face wore, which led to the belief that he was the terrible avenger, the Spirit of the Woods. His deadly hatred of the red-skins tended to confirm this fact; and from what he had already gleaned from Pellington, taken in connection with what he had seen himself of Darcy, he was satisfied that Mayfield was Maria's husband also.

Before either Sir Joshua or Captain Philip could again speak, the tramp of hoofs, and the jingle of sabers broke upon their ears, and the next moment a number of horsemen drew rein in front of the tent.

"Ah," exclaimed Sir Joshua, "it is General Brock and his staff; and now, Robert, the army will soon be on the march toward Detroit, and it will not be long before we shall be in possession of the city."

"So you make up your mind—decide yes or no—remembering that the latter will be death?"

"You have my answer already," replied the indomitable St. John; "it is no."

"Then your blood be upon your own head; and now I shall see the General and report to him."

So saying Sir Joshua went out of the tent, leaving Philip to ponder over his fate. The Englishman spoke to the General, who, leaving his well-trained steed standing unattended in front of the tent, stepped aside and entered into a low conversation with Pellington.

The flap of the tent was passing in front. He saw Brock leave his seat standing unattended, and saw that the attention of his two guards and the General's staff was drawn away to the gymnastic performance of some young Indian warriors at the farther side of the camp. All this filled his mind with a desperate resolve—a resolve to attempt to escape. It was an undertaking that would result either in freedom or death—one that none but a man of exceptional bravery and daring would attempt.

Philip, however, did not wait to calculate his chances, for fear discretion might get the better part of his valor, but with a single bound, like that of a panther, he reached the side of the General's horse. Another leap and he was upon the animal's back, flying through the camp with the speed of the wind.

His daring adventure was discovered almost instantly, and shouts and yells arose upon every side. But this thunderous noise only served to increase the speed of the fugitive's frightened steed.

The whole army was instantly astir, and a stream of leaden hail sent after the fearless young captain. Brock's staff and body-guard instantly leaped into their saddles and gave chase, but well they knew that the General's horse had no match for speed in all the army.

The fugitive cleared the encampment unharmed, and away into the woods he fled, pursued by a hundred horsemen. But he was soon out of harm's way, and as his fears began to subside, those terrible words of Sir Joshua, Pellington began to ring in his ears:

"You were engaged to one Hellice Arvine, a low-born, plebeian American girl, whom I have taken the precaution to put out of the way."

CHAPTER XXVI.
TROUBLE IN CAMP.

THE UNREMARKABLE intrusion of One-Armed Alf, the Giant Scout, in the Indian camp, at the very moment that Tom Koder was to become the victim of the savages' barbarous entertainment, was met by a general murmur of indignation.

At first the red-skins did not recognize the scout; but when the light of the camp-fires revealed his face, they appeared completely nonplussed by the cool indifference with which he came among them, carrying no weapons of any sort. This, in fact, disarmed them of hostile feelings against him, for his calm, matter-of-fact intrusion appeared to be made with impunity, arising from the ignorance of the existing of hostilities between the whites and Indians.

Pausing in the center of the camp the scout leaned upon his long cane, and ran his keen eyes over the assembly without appearing to notice what was about to be enacted there.

"Good-evening, red-skins," he said, in a tone devoid of apprehension or dramatic effect.

"Howdo?" responded the leader of the savage band, known as Wild Cat; "why One Arm come here?"

"I was journeying in these parts, when, espying your camp-fire, concluded to call and spend the night with you," replied the scout.

"Scout for Yankee Fadder, eh?"

"They tell me there is war between my people and the English: is it so?" he replied, evasively.

"He much so."

"Then you, being my friends, can have no objections to me scouting for my people can you?"

"One Arm don't know all. Ojibways fight for Canada Fadder."

"Is that so, Indian?" replied the scout, apparently surprised at the news.

"Wild Cat say he so—that make him so."

"But I see one of my people among you," said the scout, referring to Koder, who stood silently listening to the interview, with his arms folded across his breast; "and I see he is not a prisoner, not bound at least."

"He run ganlet soon—there prisoners," replied Wild Cat, pointing out those of the whites who were bound.

"Is this possible, Indian? Have you and your people all turned against my people?"

"He so. Canada Fadder have more gun, powder, blanket and whisky to give Ojibway than Yankee Fadder have."

"I am sorry to hear this, Wild Cat, for the judgment of the Great Spirit will surely come upon you. He will send the dread Spirit of the Woods to slay you one by one."

"Waugh! One Arm can not frighten Wild Cat and his warriors. The Spirit of the Woods is a coward, and will not come where there are many brave Ojibways."

"You are mistaken, Wild Cat. The Spirit

can come among you and yet you can not see him, for he is like the wind. I see you have many pale-face captives—even women and children in yonder bower. And now I advise you to release them, Wild Cat, if you would live to see your squaw again."

"One Arm talks well, but he can not advise Wild Cat. Let the white scout leave, for my braves look angry upon him."

"I come with peace in my heart," replied the scout, "but Wild Cat mistrusts me; does he fear me?"

"No Ojibway fears One Arm. He carries no weapons because he can not fight. The Great Spirit made him with but one arm, and the hand that grasps the tomahawk and scalp-knife, and the finger that pulls the trigger, he kept that they might not be raised against the red-men. And so the red-men would make the Great Spirit angry if they should slay One Arm, for he is an example of what will come to all the pale-faces that strike the Indians down."

"I don't believe in any such doctrine, Wild Cat," said a burly French half-breed, who pushed his way through the crowd at this juncture; "I'll bet this fellow kills his Ojibway every day."

"How? Can Yellowface prove what he says?" responded Wild Cat.

"Yes, wouldn't it be proof to find a knife or pistol upon the person of One Arm?"

"It would," replied Wild Cat; "the brain of Yellowface is long. Would One Arm object to being searched?"

"Would it make any difference if I did object? Are not the Ojibways many and strong—all got two hands and arms?"

"One Arm does not answer my question straight," replied Wild Cat, as though he suspected the scout's reply to be an evasion.

"I will not consent to be searched, though I will offer no resistance," the scout replied.

"Then let Yellowface search One Arm, for it was he that brought the matter up."

"I'll do it with the greatest pleasure," said the half-breed, advancing toward the scout, with an air of self-assurance.

One-Armed Alf quietly submitted to a careful search of his person from head to foot, rendering the insolent half-breed all the assistance possible.

The search occupied but a few moments, and when it was concluded, the look that settled upon the half-breed's face indicated his disappointment and baffled triumph, for he found nothing—not even a jack-knife.

And to still add to the villain's rage and mortification, his comrades burst into a peal of derisive laughter, that called forth a string of indignant oaths. Nor was his rage permitted to cool with this, for One-Armed Alf joined his comrades in their laugh, and this set him fairly foaming.

"Cuss your pieter, you white skin!" he fairly howled, striking an attitude of defiance; "I shall take no sneers and insults from your likes. If you ain't got but one arm, you needn't think you've license to insult me."

"I did not intend to offend you, Yellowface," said the scout; "but if you are inclined to take it so, I shall take no pains to retract, for your brutal impudence does not merit an apology."

"Sacre! Blast my skin if you ain't got to swaller that, or you'll never leave here without a bruised head, you ramin', long-legged sneak!" raved the vindictive half-breed, approaching Alf, as though he were going to devour him on the spot.

"I have heard a jackass bray before," coolly replied the scout—a retort that added new fuel to the enraged wrath; and the other savages gathered around the disputants in anticipation of some savage sport.

"That's no use sayin' any more, long-legs," said Yellowface; "you've said enuff to warrant you a sound slappin', and now take it, too."

So saying, the irate half-breed made a furious leap into the air, aiming a desperate blow with his open hand at the face of the scout. But he had reckoned without his host. The scout, being on the alert, dextrously warded off the blow with his left and only arm with such power and skill that the half-breed was sent spinning away fully twenty feet.

A wild, jeering laugh pealed from the lips of the spectators, whose sole attention was now drawn to two combatants.

Yellowface quickly regained his feet, and, stung to madness and fury by the taunts of his friends, made another desperate lunge at the scout with clenched fist. But he met with a reception in the shape of the scout's huge fist, that caused him to see a galaxy of stars he had never seen before, and sent him to the earth with great violence.

Yet again shouts of laughter again pealed from the lips of the spectators, while curses of frenzied rage escaped the lips of the defeated half-breed.

Calmly One-Armed Alf stood, regarding his antagonist with a keen, watchful gaze, his face growing white and rigid with some terrible inward emotion.

Yellowface again gathered himself up, and, bent upon revenge of the severest nature, he drew a double-barreled pistol and leveled it at the scout's heart. But the latter, seeing his danger, quickly threw forward the end of his long cane and struck aside the arm of the half-breed, and the stroke seemed to have caused both barrels to go off, for there was heard the double report of a fire-arm. But to the surprise and horror of all, One-Armed Alf stood erect, unharmed, while Yellowface, staggering backward, clutching at his breast, uttered a groan of agony and fell heavily to the earth, the blood spurting in crimson jets from the wound in his breast.

The savages were completely astounded by this strange turn in affairs, and for full a minute they stood motionless, gazing around them, as if expecting the rush of a concealed foe.

One-Armed Alf, too, cast a quick, uneasy glance around him, then leaning forward, with both hands upon his long cane, he gazed down at the quivering form of Yellowface and said:

"Yellowface is dead. The Great Spirit became angry because he drew his pistol upon One Arm, and he turned Wild Cat's own bullet and sent it through his heart. The Ojibways can not say One Arm slew him, for all he attempted to kill me."

"One Arm speaks the truth," replied Wild Cat, seriously impressed. "The Spirit of the Woods is abroad with death in his heart. But for every victim that he finds among the Ojibways, a pale-face shall die, too."

A murmur of applause met this declaration.

"Let the young hunter, then, be tied to a tree and burned alive."

All turned toward Koder, or rather to where he had been left standing, for Koder was gone—Koder was nowhere to be seen, and it was then that a cry of rage rung out from savage lips.

A number of warriors darted away like hounds that have just lost a trail, their bodies half-bent and their burning, ferret-like eyes searching every foot of ground.

While the attention of the Ojibways was thus engaged, a figure, upon hands and knees, crept from the shadow of the woods toward the point where Colonel Bliss and his fellow-

men were bound. With a keen knife he cut their bonds, whispering something to each one as he did so. The prisoners still sat as motionless as though their bonds had not been severed; but the skulker arose to his feet and strode boldly into camp.

And the skulker was our old friend, Jack Eller, the hero of Brandywine!

CHAPTER XXVII.
HOT WORDS AND DEADLY BLOWS.

THE presence of old Jack Eller at this moment and under the existing circumstances in the Indian camp, was attended with great daring and fearlessness of consequence. The savages, enraged by the death of Yellowface and the escape of Koder, no sooner caught sight of him than they turned upon him with all the fury of demons depicted upon their dusky faces.

He was immediately surrounded by those of the band who had not gone in search of Koder; still he maintained the daring defiance which characterized his intrusion into the camp.

"Keep back here, ye red 'ell pups; keep back, or I'll bust the hull kit of ye, tooth and nail!"

"Waugh!" exclaimed Wild Cat, "the old white-hair is the coward that killed Yellowface."

"Ye a 'arnal liar, so ye are, you nigger-head!" It was the Spirit of the Woods that chuckled it to the greasy varlet, and now look sharp or I'll call in the Spirit and have him snatch you cold, in a jiffy."

The savages shrunk back appalled. The name of the dread avenger was at times like that sufficient to fill them with terror. This, however, was only momentary. Wild Cat drew his tomahawk, and advancing toward the old hero of Brandywine, raised it over his head and said:

"The old white-head has spoken with power in his words. He has said that he could call the Spirit of the Woods. The red-men have never seen him. Let the old white-hair call him here that we may see him."

The old borderman and One-Armed Alf exchanged glances.

"Suppose I refuse ye, Wild Cat, what then?" he finally replied.

"The tomahawk of Wild Cat will drink the blood of the old white-head. I have spoken."

"Well, red-skin, if I must, reckon I must, but I swear I'm afraid the Spirit will kill some of you. It's an orful thing, and likes lin blood like sin."

"Let the old white-head not spend words, or he shall die," interrupted the impatient chief.

"Beg pardon, Wild Pussy; and so now if you'll just turn yer eyes toward that tree-top and look sharp for about forty years, you'll see the Spirit descending out of a cloud with a dew-drop on his nose."

The savages turned their eyes toward the tree-top as directed, but their knowledge of the civilized calendar and measurement of time must have been imperfectly understood, unless they had construed Eller's stated time for the Spirit to appear, into that of an instant.

"Come, oh Spirit of the Woods!" cried Eller, raising his voice to a shrill, harsh pitch; "come, bloody snooter, and gobble up these red Ojib, tooth and nail, foot and—"

He did not finish the sentence. The clear, sharp report of a rifle rung out, apparently in their very midst, and Wild Cat, staggering backward with an unearthly cry, fell dead at the feet of his comrades.

A glance at his naked breast which lay plainly revealed by the glare of the camp-fires, showed a tiny bullet-hole in the region of the heart from which the blood was welling. It told the savages that he had been slain by the Spirit of the Woods who had entered the camp unseen by mortal eye.

With faces upon which was stamped mute terror, the savages gazed first at Eller, then the Giant Scout. The former stood with empty hands where he had stood when Wild Cat fell, and the latter was still standing where he had been for the last ten minutes, still leaning upon his cane, regarding the scene before him with silent wonder and surprise.

For full five minutes a dead silence reigned. Then from their bonds arose those of our captive friends whom Eller had freed, and with a wild shout, attacked the terrified savages with such weapons as they could snatch up.

Jack Eller and One-Armed Alf joined with them in the conflict, and, too, the scout's dog took an active and deadly part in the struggle.

The savages were taken completely by surprise, and were at once routed and driven away into the woods. Our friends, however, did not pursue them. In fact, it would have been useless; besides time was too precious.

Two of the whites had been slightly wounded, and as soon as these could be attended to as well as circumstances would admit, the whole party broke camp, and under the guidance of One-Armed Alf, took their way westward through the lonely halls of the grim old woods.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 190.)

Michigan and Magnet.—The discovery of several wells of magnetic or magnetized water in Michigan, has given rise to a novel theory, which is thus propounded by one of its advocates: "The fact that electric wells, or wells whose waters have magnetic properties, do exist, is now generally conceded. That the discovery of these peculiar wells is confined to the central portion of this State is also well known, and the probability that they will always be limited to Michigan, is to the mind of every scientific man a fixed fact. Let a person, to whom this idea has never occurred, take the pains to glance at a map of this State, and he will be astonished at the resemblance which the outlines of the lower peninsula has to an ordinary magnet. The great lakes which surround it, do, in fact, form an enormous horseshoe magnet, with a proportionate current of electricity constantly circulating through those vast bodies of water,

TO ONE WHO KNOWS.

BY M. R. C.

The morning sunlight on the hills
Kisses the land and sea,
So love, with joy my whole heart fills,
And lights me on to thee.
As flows the stream, my love I pour;
And only thee it loves;
My heart the source, and thou the shore,
To hold its rinding waves.
What think'st thou, dearest, of this love
That rushes on to thee,
As rivers ever onward move
And flow into the sea?
Thy spirit penetrates my heart
To rouse or lull my soul;
One look of thine can through me dart,
And all the "me" is control.
Then turn'st the chords of love at will,
And canst each tone command;
They tremble, murmur, plead or thrill
Beneath thy master hand.
Then lead me, dear, with thy strong hands
Along whatever way;
Thy nature all my own commands,
I can not disobey.
Thou art my world: a part, the whole
Without thee, nothing is;
To know thee, and be in thy soul—
This is ecstatic bliss;
How Fate with all its love will deal
I do not care to know;
All that I wish to say and feel
Is—*that I love thee*.
I tell thee all: I know no art;
To thee my soul is bare;
Then draw me closer to thy heart,
And keep me always there!

Gentleman George:

PARLOR, PRISON, STAGE AND STREET.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE MAN-FROM-TEXAS," "MAD DETECTIVE,"
"BOCKY MOUNTAIN BOY," "WOLF DEMON," "OVER-
LAND KIT," "RED MAZEP," "ACE OF
SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FINDING A VERDICT.

For a minute at least eleven jurymen sat and stared at the twelfth, amazement written on each face.

And as for the man who had created such a ripple of astonishment, so to speak, he sat with stolid face, as if unconscious of the effect that his words had produced.

Blake was hardly more than an overgrown boy, and from his face it was plainly evident that he was not gifted with any extra amount of brains.

But, from his dull, stolid face, one would have been apt to regard him more as a fool than a rogue.

"Really, I confess I am not sure that I understood your remark, sir," the foreman of the jury said. "Did you say you thought the prisoner was innocent and ought to be acquitted?"

"That's what I said," Blake replied, placidly.

"Well, sir, I am at a loss to guess by what process of reasoning you can arrive at any such conclusion!" Hamersley exclaimed, in amazement.

Blake did not reply.

"Perhaps our friend at the lower end of the table believes, from the evidence of the old man and the wife of the prisoner, that he was not present when the officer was shot?" suggested the broker, in his smooth, oily way.

Blake made no answer to this implied explanation or excuse for his opinion. He was leaning on his elbow on the table, resting the side of his head on his hand and staring vacantly up at the ceiling.

After waiting a little while, and finding that Blake did not intend to say anything, the foreman spoke up, with decision:

"Well, gentlemen, for my part I don't believe a word of their testimony! Nor do I think that it is at all worthy of belief. I'm a New York boy, born and bred here, and, to my certain knowledge, when any of these rascals get into trouble the rest of the gang will swear to anything to get him out. They all stick by one another."

"So do the policemen," said Spence, (liquors), gruffly. "The half of them are as bad as the thieves. It's in the same boat they are."

"Dat ish so," affirmed Nitchie, (junk-dealer). "Well, that is not my experience, gentlemen," observed another of the jurymen, Jones, (coach-maker), who had all the English respect for the men in authority.

"I don't see that this question has anything to do with the case in hand at all!" the foreman remarked, impatiently. "The strong evidence against the prisoner is the testimony of Shea, who was with him in the boat and saw him fire the shot."

"Shure he's a cowardly informer!" exclaimed Spence, bitterly.

"What has that got to do with it?" demanded Hamersley, in astonishment.

"An informer's worse than a thief!"

A certain instance was still fresh in the mind of the liquor-dealer of how a party who had a grudge against him had once procured "drinks" of him on Sunday and then had gone straight to the police-station and "informed" on him.

"Dat ish true," the junkman assented, gravely. He likewise had once got into trouble by reason of an informer.

"But the man was under oath," Egbert (carman) said, in a stubborn sort of way, as if that fact was enough to carry conviction to any one.

"Shure I wouldn't believe an informer if he swore on a stack of Bibles!" cried Spence, indignantly.

Gentlemen, we are wandering from the subject!" Hamersley declared. "Gentlemen, I move that the gentleman at the foot of the table give us his reason for assuming that the prisoner is innocent."

"Yes, yes," muttered three or four of the majority.

"Now, sir, if you will have the kindness to satisfy our curiosity upon this point, we'll be obliged to you, and perhaps, too, we shall be able to convince you that the stand you have taken is untenable."

"Give us your reason, man, anyway!" exclaimed Spence, who felt curious upon the point.

The juror, thus directly addressed, suffered his eyes to come down from the ceiling a moment and rest upon the faces now turned toward him in curious expectation.

"I shan't tell," said Blake, laconically.

The eleven jurymen certainly were astonished.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed the foreman, in despair, "it is no use wasting time after such an answer as that. I move that we report to the court that we can not agree."

"There's no lie in that!" Spence observed.

"But, see here, gentlemen!" cried Jones, (coach-maker), rising in his earnestness, "the Judge will never allow us to be dismissed until we do come to some sort of a verdict, or take a proper time to discuss the matter. Why, we have not been out over half an hour. I confess the case seems to me to be a very clear one, and that there is no doubt of the prisoner's guilt, although some of the jury may differ with me in regard to the extent of the punishment."

Mr. Jones bowed to Spence, Nitchie and Murray. "If the young man at the end

of the table has any doubts upon the legal matters, let him tell the foreman, and he can apply to the Judge and get the desired information. I've seen that done in cases where I have been on the jury before and they did not quite agree."

Jones then sat down, and again every eye was fixed upon the stubborn juror, but he showed no indication of asking for information.

"Well, any thing that you want me to ask the Judge?" the foreman said.

Blake shook his head, but did not speak.

"Oh, let's go in the court again; what's the use of foolin' like this?" Spence cried, impatiently.

"The man might give his reasons," Haight (saddler) said, coaxingly.

"Yis, wan of us might change his mind if he had good reason for it to the fore," Spence observed.

But Blake never changed his position, nor allowed his eyes to wander from the ceiling. Words were evidently wasted upon him.

Gentlemen!" said the foreman, rising, "is it agreed, then, that we go back to the courtroom and inform the Judge that we can not agree and ask to be discharged?"

The jurymen, with the exception of Blake, all looked at each other for a moment, and then, one after the other, nodded their heads to Hamersley. Blake never stirred.

The foreman gave the obstinate juror one last chance.

"Is that your wish, too, sir?"

Thus directly addressed, Blake nodded.

Then the jury filed back into the court.

A hum of conversation passed around the courtroom as the jury entered, but as they took their seats a dead silence succeeded.

The Judge laid down the legal papers, which he had been perusing, and took a look at the jury.

A single glance at the troubled countenance of the foreman of the twelve men, "good and true," and the Judge instantly guessed that the jury had not been able to agree. An impatient frown came over his face, as in his mind there was no doubt of the prisoner's guilt.

Briefly the foreman stated that the jury had not been able to agree.

The Judge was not particularly given to speech-making, but on this occasion he rather "let himself out," and gave the jury such a reproof as a jury rarely gets; and at its close he told the jury to retire and not to come back until they did agree, adding, significantly, that before morning they would probably manage to find a verdict, but not to hurry themselves on his account, as he was used to waiting.

Back again to their dingy apartment the twelve men went, and again resumed their seats.

Most of the jury felt that the Judge's reproof was deserved, but Spence was as angry as a disturbed hornet.

"He manes to lock us up until we do agree!" he exclaimed, in exasperation. "Bad cess to him! I change my vote this minute! I say the man is not guilty now, and I'll stick to it, if I stay here till I rot!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A REMARKABLE JURY.

NEARLY all of the jurymen were struck aghast at the abrupt declaration of the Irishman.

"I repeat it!" Spence cried, glaring around him as if with intent to pick a quarrel with some one; "the man is not guilty, and that blaggard of a Judge can't make me go back of that if I stay here till I'm carried out feet first, d'ye mind?"

"But surely you wouldn't alter your opinion simply because you think that the Judge is disposed to be a little severe?" the foreman asked, in astonishment.

"May the devil fly away wid me if I bring him in guilty, now!" cried Spence, doggedly. "Is it for the likes of a man like the Judge for to sit on the bench an' as good as say that we're no better than a pack of fools, because we can't agree?"

"I think that you are putting it too strongly, sir," Jones said, mildly. "I am sure I do not consider that the Judge used any reprehensible language. He simply said that it was our duty to find a verdict, and that the case appeared to him to be perfectly plain and clear. And, for my part, I fully agree with the Judge there. I do not understand how any one could listen to the evidence and not be perfectly satisfied that this man Dominick not only killed the officer, but intended to do so; or, at least, to put the affair in its mildest form—intended to disable him."

"You believe that dirty informer!" cried Spence, shaking his fist wildly in excitement.

"Most decidedly I do."

"Well, I don't!" exclaimed Spence; "an' I'm not going to hang any man on the word of such a rapparee as this Shea."

"Ah, but my dear sir, you are not obliged to hang him, you know," Murray, the oily, bald-headed broker, interposed. "I myself have grave doubts, but I should be willing to bring in a verdict that would send this man up to the State prison for a term of years. It is clearly our duty to protect society from the assaults of these ruffians," and then Mr. Murray rubbed his hands together, softly, and smiled beamingly at his fellow-jurymen.

"Oh, yes!" retorted Spence, scornfully. "It's a ruffian he is, because he's poor. If he wor a rich chap, living in wan of the brown-stone fronts up on Fifth avenue, maybe you wouldn't be so aisy about it. It's twenty years he'll get now if we bring in a verdict agin' him."

"Gents, to speak classically, there's a good deal of chin music in this crowd, but it takes money to buy whisky," said Delap (painter), one of the jury who had not previously spoken.

This peculiar remark caused the rest of the jurymen to open their eyes, with the exception of the German, Blake, who had quietly seated himself in the corner; and seemed to be half-asleep.

Delap had a good deal of what is usually called the "Bowery-Boy" style about him in person; he was a thick-set, muscular young fellow with an honest, intelligent-looking face.

"As I have said, gents, there's bin a good deal of talk," he continued, in the easy and measured way so common to the born and bred New Yorker. "Now for my part, I'll allow that I'm kinder sick of gus, an' I move that we settle this business right up. As far as I kin see in this election, there's eight of us solid for murder in the first degree, and four that ain't that way, so I jest think that we eight ought to knock under to the other four so that we can find a verdict."

"What!" cried Hamersley, in astonishment.

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the old coach-maker, rising in excitement.

"I'll be hanged if I do!" said the carman, bluntly.

"Oh, ain't that all O. K.?" asked the painter, pretending to be very much astonished. "Hadn't eight ought to knuckle to four? No—well, n'p'raps it ought to be the other way; the four ought to yield to the eight."

A murmur of assent went up from the eight at this, but the four mentioned did not seem to relish the idea.

"The four are not solid," Haight, the saddler, said. "There are two for acquittal and two for conviction."

"Dat ish not so," the junkman said. "I agrees mit mine friend here," and Nitchie bowed to Spence. "I change mine vote."

"Aha!" cried Spence, exultingly; "there's another man that isn't going to be walked over by this scut of a Judge."

"Three for acquittal, eight for murder in the first degree, and one for manslaughter," Hamersley said. "That is correct, I believe?"

"Really," Murray, the broker, observed, slowly, "I believe that I must change my vote."

"Oh!" exclaimed Spence, "it's four to eight we are! Oh, you'll all come to the four after a while!"

"No, sir!" exclaimed Murray, drawing himself up, and looking dignified. "I do not change in that way, sir. From what the Judge said I perceive clearly that I was wrong in thinking that a verdict of manslaughter could be found according to the evidence in this case. The deed was not committed without premeditation, and there was no sudden excitement. No, sir, I am for a verdict of murder in the first degree."

Then Murray, who had risen at the first of his speech, sat down perfectly satisfied; at last he had created a sensation.

"Nine to three, then," Hamersley remarked.

"Gentlemen, I think that you ought to come round to our views upon this subject," Kemble said, mildly. He was the watchmaker and had not spoken before.

"Suppose that we compromise upon a verdict of murder in the second degree," Ramsay (clerk) suggested. "He probably would be sentenced to imprisonment for life; and really, although the man deserves it, I think that I should prefer not to hang him."

"And your opinion, sir?" Ramsay addressed the junkman.

"Dis shentlemen speaks for me," replied Nitchie.

"As there doesn't seem to be any prospect of our agreeing upon a verdict, I suppose that we will have to remain here until the Judge's patience is worn out," Hamersley exclaimed in disgust.

"We're booked for the night, then!" Egbert (carman) exclaimed. "I hope that you're satisfied—your fellow in the corner there. This is all your doing. You ought to be locked up for a week, and fed on bread and water."

"Oh, don't say anything about eating!" Delap, the painter, cried. "The Judge is liked, and if we don't fetch in a verdict, we'll get no square meal until we're discharged to-morrow, and it's all your fault, young feller!"

Blake never heeded their angry words or looks, but gazed at them stolidly.

"I hope you'll be half-starved before morning!" growled Jones.

Then a dim sort of smile crept slowly over the face of the obstinate juror.

"I'll not go hungry," he said, and then deliberately drew a huge Bologna sausage from his pocket, and held it up to the view of the rest.

"Oh!" yelled the astonished jurymen in a sort of chorus.

Blake replaced the sausage in his pocket, and surveyed his fellow-jurors placidly.

"Gents!" cried Delap (the painter), springing excitedly to his feet, "if we're locked up here until morning all on account of this slab-sided galoat, and he attempts to chew that compound of boiled dough while I have to go hungry, I'll jest mount onto my hind legs and comb his wool for him if he send me up to the Island for a month for it!"

A dim look of alarm came over Blake's dull features at the angry words of the excited Bowery Boy, and secretly he began to wish he had kept the sausage in his pocket.

"Time wore on; the gas was lighted, yet the jury were no nearer an agreement than before. Arguments were wasted upon the three obstinate jurymen, who stood out so sturdily for the prisoner's innocence of the charge brought against him."

At last Hamersley, perceiving that there was no possible prospect of the jury agreeing, sent word to the Judge to that effect.

His Honor was savage; he had missed his regular dinner hour, and for no purpose.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BLAKE'S REASON.

Tired and worn out the jurymen looked as they filed into the box.

The courtroom was lit up, and all the spectators stared anxiously upon the twelve men who held the fate of Gentleman George in their hands.

The Judge alone knew how unsatisfactory the result of the jury's deliberation had been.

And then, when the foreman, Hamersley, rose in answer to the question, and announced that the jury had been unable to agree, a little murmur of astonishment followed.

Sternly the Judge ran his eyes over the faces of the jurymen as he put the question to the foreman: did he think that they could agree upon a verdict if they were allowed more time to deliberate upon the matter? Hamersley instantly replied that in his judgment there was no possible chance of their agreeing upon a verdict, and the faces of the rest of the jurymen plainly indicated that they agreed fully with the opinion of their spokesman.

Then, with a few biting, sarcastic words, the Judge dismissed the jury, and the trial of Gentleman George was ended.

Great was the disgust of the District Attorney—a feeling that was shared by Judge Bruyn, who had really done nearly all of the hard work of the trial, and who confidently expected that the prisoner would be convicted of murder in the first degree. Of the prisoner's guilt he had no doubt. In some mysterious way, not warranted by the evidence, he found that his judgment had been influenced against the society brigand. As a general thing he regarded a law trial as a game of chess wherein he might exhibit his skill, and when the contest was over he cared nothing as to the fate of the chessmen. But, in this affair, almost before he was aware of it, he found himself regarding the prisoner in the light of a personal enemy—one whom he had sworn to hunt down into his grave.

And when, after the trial was ended, the Judge sat in his library at midnight—he had escorted Miss Desmond home that evening in company with Medham—and thought over the events of the trial and the respite of the prisoner, he caught himself muttering that it was not for long, and that sooner or later he would have Gentleman George by the hip, and either cast him into the snaky gripe of the hangman's hempen noose, or into the State prison for life.

And then the question came up in the Judge's mind why he wished evil to Gentleman George.

The wily, subtle lawyer and slippery politician joggled with himself; accustomed to hoodwink the world, he tried to deceive even himself.

He was a rascal, and deserves to be hung!" he exclaimed aloud, and then to the mind of Bruyn came the thought of the strange resem-

blance that the prisoner bore to some one that he had once known.

"I must have been very familiar with the person, whoever it is, or else the resemblance would not strike me so strongly. Twenty times to-day at least have I caught myself looking at that man and wondering who on earth it was that he looked like. It is very strange indeed. I'll have to hang him though for all that."

And with this reflection the Judge went to bed.

Naturally, the morning papers of the day after the trial of Gentleman George had ended, contained a full account of the proceedings, and not only that, but the industrious reporters had succeeded in "interviewing" most of the jury, and so a full report of nearly all that had taken place in the jury-room was given freely to the public. And the journals, too, had commented in very plain terms upon the course pursued by the three obstinate jurymen.

Spence was in a fever of passion about the terms applied to himself and the other two who had stood out for the prisoner's innocence, and openly proclaimed that if he could only kill a newspaperman he should die happy.

The comments of the outspoken journals did not trouble Blake or Nitchie much, for they never took the trouble to read the newspapers at all.

And the prying reporters, too, had found hard nuts to crack when they attempted to extract information from either of the two foreigners.

Nitchie was polite but reserved; Blake was dull and said nothing at all.

Gentleman George was sent back to his cell, and he slept better that night than he had done since he had entered the gloomy portals of the Tombs.

The next morning the eminent Three-Decker called upon him. He found George busily engaged perusing the morning papers.

The lawyer was in excellent spirits.

"Reading an account of the trial, eh?" the counselor said.

"Yes."

"That fellow Blake stood out like a Trojan, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"By the way, George, between you and me and the bedpost," said the lawyer, sinking his voice confidentially, "how much did it cost you to fix him?"

"Nothing at all!" exclaimed George, in astonishment; "why, did you think that I had tampered with him?"

"Well, I had an idea that way," replied the lawyer, who was considerably mystified. "He refused to reason upon the subject at all. The *Sun* comes right out and declares the jury were tampered with, of course not giving names, and the *Times* hints pretty strongly that it thinks so, too."

"Yes, I have read the article in the *Times*; but now, how are we?"

"Well, George, the prospects are that we can push your case off for a year or so, and perhaps get you released on bail. Have to wait, you know, until the interest in the affair dies out and the newspapers get howling after some one else. As for George, in the good old time we had a ring through the noses of nearly all these newspaper fellows, and we used to make 'em sing a different tune. Keep your spirits up, though; the old Judge won't have you in his clutches next time, I hope, and we'll get a fairer show for our money. By-by," and the ponderous counselor withdrew.

Hardly had he gone when Hero, George's wife, came in.

Hero had changed a great deal; she had grown thinner and paler, and it was plain to be seen that the trial of Gentleman George was killing the gentle, loving woman, the partner of his sorrows.

"Good-morning, my dear!" exclaimed George, rising and kissing her. "You see that I am not done for yet, no journey up the river or chance to dance upon nothing for a good six months yet, and the counselor thinks that, in time, he may be able to get me out on bail. Have you read the account of how the jury stood?"

"Yes."

"The obstinacy of that dull-looking fellow saved me; the chances are that the other two would have agreed upon murder in the first degree if they had had the whole ten solid against them."

"It was cheap at fifty dollars, wasn't it?" Hero asked.

"What was cheap?" George exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Why, that man's obstinacy."

"What has fifty dollars to do with it?"

"Simply that he understood that if the jury disagreed, if you were acquitted, it would be fifty dollars in his pocket?" Hero replied.

"Oh!" George cried, admiringly; "you managed to reach the fellow then and 'square' him?"

"Yes."

"How did you do it? He seems a stupid sort of donkey to get at."

"Through his weakness. As soon as he saves up money enough to open a grocery store he is to be married. I discovered the girl, a shrewd, grasping German. She jumped at the offer at once; fifty dollars was a large sum. What did either she or her lover care about justice as long as they were not troubled? I gave the girl twenty-five dollars, and agreed to give her the other twenty-five at the end of the trial, if you were not found guilty."

"By Jove! you're a jewel of a woman!" cried George, putting his arms around her exultingly.

"And yet, you have ceased to love me," she said, reproachfully, but submitting to his caresses. "You love this actress, Miss Desmond; I know all about it now; and you have a rival too—Judge Bruyn, the man who did his best to have you hung because he wants this gold-mined doll for himself. Her love came near destroying you, while mine was your salvation."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 196.)

WOLFGANG, The Robber of the Rhine:

OR, THE YOUNG KNIGHT OF THE CROSSIGORDE.

BY CAPT. FREDK. WHITTAKER.

AUTHOR OF "NADIA, THE RUSSIAN SPY," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE SEA CAT," "THE ROCK RIDER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

THE YOUNG WIFE.

If the baron had been a little quicker, he might have solved the mystery of Sir Adelbert's disappearance.

The knight turned to the right as soon as he was in the crowd, and passed rapidly through a throng of Bavarian knights of the poorer kind, who stood around tables near the entrance of the great booth. He was soon lost in the crowd, and pursued his way across the great square, through soldiers of all kinds, till he arrived at the old town-hall, opposite the great fountain.

Here Sir Adelbert halted, and entered the shelter of a small but deep archway, that sheltered a side postern under the municipal building. All the public edifices of Nuremberg were appropriated for the various magnates of the empire, but Sir Adelbert appeared to be perfectly at home everywhere.

He gave a low tap at the door, which was instantly opened by Max the Ranger, now dressed in a handsome livery of dark green, with a silver falcon in full flight on his breast.

"How is your lady, Max?" asked Sir Adelbert of the Ranger.

"Well, my lord," said honest Stoffer, respectfully. "But she has been crying a little since the tournament."

"She shall be comforted," said Sir Adelbert, laughing. "Bolt the door, Max. No one will need to come in here."

He went down a dark passage, and up a winding flight of stone steps, then down several corridors in the quaint, rambling old building, till a light shone under a door in front of him.

He advanced, and gave three knocks on the panel. A man's voice within, that seemed to be reading aloud, ceased at the sound, and a female voice cried out: "It is Rudolph; I know it!"

There was a swift rustle of garments and a patter of little feet, and then the door flew open, and sweet little Bertha danced out, radiant with joy, and flung herself on the knight's breast with a glad cry.

"Adelbert! Rudolph! my lord! my husband! How I have been longing for you all day! Father Francis was reading me the story of the princess Psyche, but I hardly heard it, listening for my lord's step. Where have you been all day? I have been so lonely."

Sir Adelbert smiled and kissed his young wife.

"I have been away on business, lady-bird," he said. "Did you like the tournament?"

"Oh!" she said shuddering, "it was terrible. I looked everywhere for you and could not see you. Max put me in that splendid horse-litter, and took me there, but I was all alone. No one seemed to see me, for I was hidden by the curtains. And then those thirteen knights came in, and the fighting began, and I was frightened for the poor fellows, and I did want to talk to some one, and you were nowhere to be seen. I was glad when it was over. If you had been there it would have been different. Then I should have loved to see you fight, as I did when you struck down Sir Wolfgang. But

and then—what is this Croscorde, my lord, that I hear the people cry out?"

She broke off abruptly with this question. Sir Adelbert answered in the words of the order:

"The cross in the heart; the heart under the cross; that is the Croscorde, Bertha. The emperor instituted the order this day, to regenerate knighthood to what it once was. Let us all pray with him, God bless the Croscorde!"

"God bless the Croscorde," said little Bertha, hardly knowing what it was, only that her husband loved it.

"God bless the Croscorde!" chimed in the gentle voice of father Francis.

CHAPTER XIII.

COMING HOME.

The tournament was over at last. For three whole days had the knights of the Croscorde withstood all comers, without receiving a fall. After the first day, the marshals of the lists passed an order that half an hour's rest should be given to men and horses between each three courses, and the unfair crowding in of the Rhineland knights was rendered impossible to be tried over again.

In the third day's tilting Sir Wolfgang of Erntine did well. He broke three lances on three different enemies, and caused the Margrave of Wurtemberg to lose a stirrup, which no one else had done.

When the tournament was over, he was among the first to take his departure with all his train. Since the night of the feast he had been looking everywhere for Sir Adelbert, but without success. Remarkable as was the figure of the knight, it was yet nowhere to be seen, and Sir Wolfgang was disappointed.

In seeing the face of the Grand Master of the Croscorde he was equally unsuccessful. The emperor now came into the field save in full armor and with visor down. He had been seen to raise the latter, but only at a great distance, and no one could have told his face even then.

So that Sir Wolfgang went his way in the worst of tempers with himself and all mankind, and rode for two days without interchanging a syllable with a soul, on his way to the Black Forest.

On the third day, as he was nearing the forest, he espied, at a great distance to the right, on a parallel road, a cloud of dust.

"Whose column can this be?" he asked, of Red Max, who rode close behind him. The Baron of Ritterschloss was too far behind to be there. That is the fork road that comes in by the front of the castle, is it not?"

"Ay, my lord," said Red Max, stroking his beard; "it seems to be a heavy column of men-at-arms, for their helmets glitter through the dust. But it can not be the men of Ritterschloss."

"Then it must be enemies," said Erntine, decisively; "no one but Ritterschloss or an enemy has any right there in full armor."

Red Max looked nervous. He felt that his master's words were true. Sir Wolfgang turned to his trumpet.

"Sound the trot," he said, sharply; "those fellows will get home before we do, else."

The loud blare of the trumpet rung over the meadows; and the long column of men-at-arms, over a hundred strong, took up the trot; and went away down the dusty road after Sir Wolfgang, with a steady clank! clank! clank!

Before them lay the dense cover of the Black Forest, into which, on another road, the cloud of dust that indicated the enemy was going at a rapid rate.

Their own road, white, hot, broad and dusty, struck into the forest a quarter of a mile ahead.

While they were still outside the forest, they could trace their enemies for some distance by the white cloud that rose above the trees; and their faces were hidden.

Sir Wolfgang trotted rapidly ahead on his great black charger, the white dust rising in clouds from below, and powdering horse and man alike into gray images.

The men in the column behind were all equally gray, faintly seen through the dusty veil; and, but for the loud clank of armor and the thunder of horses' feet, they might have passed for a troop of specters, flitting along in the deep shades of the Black Forest.

On they went at a round pace for over a mile, till the heavy war-horses, unused to such rapid work on the march, were all covered with foam. The road went straight as an arrow through the same silent, solemn wall of fir-trees, and they were still a mile or more from the junction. Sir Wolfgang moderated his charger to a slow trot, and jogged along at an easier pace.

"They can't help crossing in front of us," he said; "we mustn't kill our horses before there's any need of it. Walk!"

The troop kept up its course at a walk while their horses cooled, and so they proceeded to within a mile of the forks of the road, the same sultry blue sky and blazing August sun overhead, the same silent pine-trees on either side of the road.

Suddenly, at a silent signal from their leader, the whole column halted and kept still in the middle of the road. Sir Wolfgang listened intently.

Through the dark veil of forest, and some distance ahead, to the right, came the rapid clank! clank! clank! of a quickly-trotting column of men-at-arms.

"Forward!" shouted the old rider, as he gave the rein to his charger and thundered off. But he had not gotten a hundred yards on his road when he saw a white flag, borne by a knight in armor, emerge from the woods a mile ahead, cross the road, and disappear into the forest on the opposite side, on the road to Falkenstein.

The knight was going at a keen trot, and was followed by a column of troopers at the same pace, in sections of eight abreast, as straight and regular as machines.

They were all half-hidden behind a thick yellow veil of dust, and passed so rapidly that one could not count their numbers.

In the middle of the troop appeared a litter with four white horses, which flashed across the road and disappeared in the forest. Then more men-at-arms and the troop had disappeared. As the last man entered the forest on the Falkenstein road, Sir Wolfgang's company was still three-quarters of a mile off, trotting hard to catch the others. The old rider shook his head and galloped on ahead, and arrived at the opening in time to see the last man of the strange column disappearing round a curve of the Falkenstein road as far ahead as ever. He halted in disgust. It was plain that the enemy had the heels of him.

When his men came up, he again brought them to a walk, and followed leisurely. The old road still went on through the woods to Ritterschloss. The cross-road was much narrower and led in a serpentine sweep to the front gate of Falkenstein castle.

"They can not get in. So much is certain," Sir Wolfgang observed; "the senechal has the portcullis down and the drawbridge up, so we

shall take them in the rear if that's their game. We can afford to go slow."

He pursued his march in the best order known in those days, with his baggage animals in the center of his train, and a sufficient guard in front and rear.

He himself, with visor down, mindful of former ill-luck, rode several paces in front with his lance up, ready to drop in a moment.

So the robber knight's troop slowly proceeded along the winding road, no longer dusty, but cool and green, the woods around them gradually changing to oak and beech, with glimpses of deer flitting through the green archways.

The nearer they came to the castle the greater was the excitement. The tracks of their predecessors' feet could be plainly seen all the time, cutting up the green turf, and here and there a broken feather caught in a branch, showed where some careless man-at-arms had lost a plume as he rode too near the trees.

At last they arrived at the point where the next turn would bring them in sight of the castle gate, and Sir Wolfgang, full of impatience, gave the rein to his horse and galloped on ahead. He turned the corner and glanced ahead.

Not a soul was to be seen in front of the castle, but the broad brown track led right past the gate, and into the greenwood beyond where the straight road led down to a ford of the Rhine, that went into the territory of the Margrave of Wurtemberg.

Sir Wolfgang threw his horse on its hanches as he drew sharply up. His suspicions were at once excited. He glanced nervously round, expecting an ambush, but nothing was to be seen.

The castle drawbridge was up and the portcullis closed, so that every thing was safe there. The senechal and several men were at the latter over the gate, where Sir Adelbert had first seen Bertha. They were looking anxiously out toward the woods as if something had alarmed them, and caught sight of their masters at once with a shout of joy.

As Sir Wolfgang halted his men came up and imitated his example, and the whole troop preserved a dead silence, under the vague feeling of apprehension engendered by the sudden stoppage.

Through the midst of this silence the clank! clank! of another troop of men-at-arms trotting through the woods far in their rear became gradually more and more audible.

The robber knight threw up his visor to hear more distinctly, and there was no mistake. A second troop of armed men, perhaps enemies, was without doubt coming rapidly after them.

Sir Wolfgang felt a strange throb at his breast as he listened. He felt no doubt that it was his enemies, who made those sounds. As he listened he heard the noise of another column still, coming from the direction of Ritterschloss, and realized that he was surrounded.

"Forward!" he said, his voice shaking for the first time; "enemies are round us, lads, and we mustn't take shelter."

The men were all very silent, as they rode forward over the flower meads in front of the castle. While they marched on, down rattled the drawbridge, and the portcullis rose slowly up in its groove.

Sir Wolfgang rode into the courtyard with a sigh of relief, and could hardly believe his eyes when he saw his men all safe in, without a sign of an enemy outside as yet.

He threw himself from his horse and ran up the steps of the watch-tower, by the gate, followed by the senechal.

"Who passed you just before we came, Conrad?" asked the knight, hastily, when he had attained the summit and looked out to the forest.

"A great troop of men-at-arms, with a horse-litter in their midst," replied Conrad. "We thought they were enemies, but they rode by at a trot toward the ford as if they had not so much as seen the castle."

"What banner bore they?" demanded Sir Wolfgang.

"A white banner," said the senechal; "and in the midst thereof a crimson cross, bearing a golden cross on itself. None can tell whose device it was."

Sir Wolfgang turned pale, but said nothing. He stood on the loftiest tower in the castle, which rose far above the tallest trees in the forest, and commanded an extensive view of the country round. He could see the road to the castle, the road to the ford, and the narrow forest-path that led to Ritterschloss. He also knew well the line of the outside road from Nuremberg, which he could trace by the break in the tree-tops. All along this outer line as he looked rose a cloud of white dust, that soared above the dark-green forest in a well-defined line for at least a mile.

Then he looked down at the road he had come by. A deep, compact troop of mail-clad horsemen came trotting on in the midst of it, and they came in full view as Sir Wolfgang continued to gaze.

At the head of them rode a knight in white armor with a red spot on his breast, quite like a drop of blood, even at that distance. On the end of his long lance was a small swallow-tailed white pennon, and in the midst of the field shone the bloody heart with the golden cross thereon.

Sir Wolfgang turned round to the river and ford. There, on the ford road, was the same column he had first seen, with the great square white banner he had noticed. But now that he saw it nearer, he felt a thrill of terror, as he recognized, in the midst of the white field, the holy Croscorde, in its glory of crimson and gold.

His troop of men-at-arms was halted as if cut off any escape toward the river, and Sir Wolfgang gleefully turned his gaze toward the path to Ritterschloss.

Behold! There was another troop coming along there in single file, and at their head was another white pennon, with the crossed heart in its center.

"We are beset," said Sir Wolfgang, gloomily; "the whole power of the empire lies behind the folds of that banner and those pennons. There is but one thing to do. I must marry this Bertha quickly, and open the gates. Then I shall be able to say I hold the lands by right of my wife, and the emperor himself can not touch me."

He turned to descend the tower, when the senechal arrested him with these words:

"My lord," he said, "we fear that the lady Bertha is sick or dead. The doors of the Falcon's tower have been locked ever since you went. The food was taken in, and the dishes left outside till yesterday morning. Since then nothing has been seen of her or father Francis."

Sir Wolfgang looked across the castle court and over the battlements to the Falcon's tower. "Fool," he said, "look there."

On the gallery that ran round the top of the tower, was a female figure, and close beside it that of a monk. As he looked, both disappeared into the tower.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 293.)

A common difference—a matrimonial squabble.

The Silver Serpent:

THE MYSTERY OF WILLOWOLD.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "ETOL," "STEALING A HEART," "IRON AND GOLD," "PEARL OF PEARLS," "RED SCORION," "HERCULES, THE HUNCHBACK," "PLANNING TALESMAN," "CAT AND TIGER," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNMASKING A WOMAN.

WHEN Amelia Gregor came down-stairs, after changing her attire, and did not find her husband—he having gone to Willowold with Thadlis—she immediately inquired the cause of his absence.

The nurse, who had spread a light supper in the dining-room, and who was awaiting the appearance of her mistress, said:

"He has gone on a mission that you may guess, madam. And such was the message, precise to the word, which Colonel Paul Gregor had instructed her to deliver."

"Ah, yes," thought Amelia, who did guess at once, "to-day was the day for his visit to the prisoner. Missing to-day, he has gone to-night." Then aloud: "Did he go alone, Mary?"

"No, madam, Thadlis went with him."

"Yes, he has certainly gone to Willowold," she concluded; saying: "Well, Mary, let me have a cup of tea, and I will retire. There is need of my remaining up for him—I will leave the lamp burning. Come, my children."

Taking the boy and girl by their hands, she entered the dining-room, and nurse Mary followed.

The household of Colonel Paul Gregor was composed only of himself and wife, the two children, Mary, the nurse, and Thadlis, the stableman. Servants, he had none. He could not retain them. He had engaged any number, both men and women, for indoor service, but his boisterous humors, his fiery temper, rough language and overbearing treatment of those menial to him, made his house an undesirable home for hired hands or domestics. Mary, however, had endured but a small portion of his arrogant, acrimonious and sometimes devilish domineering—probably because she had the precious care of his children, which the stern man idolized—and hence could tolerate his occasional bursts of excitement and harshness—not being herself the butt—demanding and receiving an unusual salary in consequence of the countless duties which devolved upon her.

"Mamma," asked the boy, as the four sat at the table, "what was all that noise up-stairs? I heard papa scolding, and somebody fired off a pistol, didn't they?"

"A bad man came here to-night, my child, and tried to rob your papa."

"Did he catch him?"

"No, I wish he had. He would have killed him."

"Killed him, mamma?"

"Yes."

"Why, isn't it wicked to kill people?" exclaimed the little fellow.

"Something."

"The Good Book, my dears, tells us never to kill anybody," said the nurse, quietly. "I don't think your papa would have killed him; he would have hurt him a little, perhaps, for acting so wrong; and she trod on the toe of her mistress beneath the table, giving her a warning look at the same time."

But Amelia Gregor did not relish the interference of the nurse.

"Be careful not to dispute what I say, Mary," commanded the mother, sternly, and again to the boy: "The wicked man who came here is your papa's worst enemy. He tried to stab papa with a knife on the road to-night. He would kill papa if he had a chance—he would kill you, or your sister, or mamma. He is a bad, bad man. One of these days you will grow to be strong and tall, and you must remember that this man is your deadly foe. You must hunt him down and shoot him!"—here her eyes scintillated, and she breathed hard, speaking in a tone that was half hoarse, yet so keen, penetrating, venomous, that the boy involuntarily recoiled. "His name is Jules Willoughby. He has been your papa's worst enemy for ten long years; he drove your papa to commit a crime! If ever you get a chance you must kill him—kill him, my child. Don't forget his name: Jules Willoughby. Let it be burned into your brain. Stamp it forever on your heart. Speak it with your lips till you can think of nothing else, till you dream of it constantly, and despise it more and more."

"Move one step, and I'll bore you with a bullet!" snapped Willoughby, covering the nurse with a pistol which flew from his bosom as though with the quickness of magic; and if you pull your trigger, madam, we'll die together!"—to Amelia Gregor, at whom he pointed a second pistol which gleamed in his other hand.

And holding them under the aim of the two pistols, and glancing at each alternately, he smiled grimly.

Amelia Gregor quailed. She lowered her weapon slowly, and her face, contorted with passion, betrayed emotions of cowardice.

"You perceive, I am no fool. Now drop that—drop it, I say, or I'll fire. Do you hear me?"

Obedient his savage order, she dropped the pistol, which exploded and discharged its bullet through the door.

"Now then," said Willoughby, becoming calmer, but frowning threateningly, "I'll explain why I am in your house. I premise by telling you that I know all—everything. For ten years Willse De Martine and yourself—vile schemers!—have perpetrated the foulest villainy. The time for your downfall has come. Ha! do I make you tremble?—good. I am on my way to Nashville to meet one who can aid in proving you the base woman that you are. Ere you can escape, I will have the hounds of the law on your track, to punish you for what I have suffered—to wreak retribution for your crime against my dear Elise. Do I sting deep? Is this bite from the serpent to your brain? Tremble! I am Jules Willoughby the avenger!"

She ground her white teeth, and fingered her skirt with nervous, jerking fingers, and a smile like the grin of a corpse wreathed her quivering, twitching lips.

"Oh, keep this up, Jules Willoughby. My husband will be here presently. You cannot disarm him as easily as you did me. Keep it up—go on—he will settle with you."

"Your husband!—he is safe enough. You may never see him again. I have no fears of his coming."

"What do you mean? You have murdered him?"

"Look!"—striding across the room and throwing open the shutters of the side windows, "Look there! Do you see anything?"

Afar off, floating above a line of woodland, she beheld a vast cloud of smoke spiraling upward, rolling heavily away on the air.

"Merciful Heaven! It is Willowold!"

"Ay, Willowold. Your husband is buried in the provision cellar. He died on the very spot of his own wickedness—Halt there, or I fire!"

She had stepped toward him with a wild scream.

"Murderer! It is your doing."

"Halt, I say! Don't come too near if you value your life. Your husband, Willse De Martine, is past all earthly aid. Now, listen to me. By chance, I obtained possession of the correspondence, no matter how. There is a letter—producing a letter which he had retained from among the missives he stole from Varian Cro-

toward the road, wondering why her husband did not return.

She had not slept well. Her eyes were a little heavy, the lid drooping languorously and their depths dry and listless.

The day was glorious. Trees, bushes, vines, and grass, all wet from the storm of the night gone, seemed breathing the warmth of the sun, and aglow with panoplies of green and bloom glowing with sprays of gems.

She sat alone at one of the parlor windows. The children were not yet down, and Mary Dyle was busy with the breakfast-things.

"It is strange," she broke forth, at last, as her languid gaze roamed vainly along the road for sight of her husband. "What can keep Paul? Has anything happened? But no: nothing could well happen, they guard her so carefully. I wish she was dead; then the worry would be past."

Suddenly, and to her astonishment, and starting her from reveries not over pleasant, a man's voice jarred in the silence of the room.

"Hortense de Martine, I am here!" cut upon her ears like a scalpel.

With a cry, a gasp, turning livid in the face, she sprang from the chair and wheeled round. A man stood in the doorway. Had she doubted it was when she heard the voice, she could not be mistaken now: she was confronted by Jules Willoughby!

He had come straightway there from the burning room at Willowold, from the pit to which he had confined Colonel Paul Gregor; thither roundabout, to avoid being seen by any one who might chance to be watching the road; and his object was to surprise the woman whom he now faced, and enjoy the apparent signs of fear which that surprise legibly created.

But, more; he had called her Hortense De Martine!

"You did not expect to see me, madam," he said in a deep tone—a tone like Varian Crozier's, and very deliberate—advancing firmly into the parlor.

"Jules—Jules Willoughby!"—the exclamation was husky, stammered as if she had lost control of her voice; and whiter grew her features, and tighter she clung to the sill, her body drawn high and rigid, her gaze staring and cowering; for the quiet mien, yet ominous glitter of his eyes, contained a latent menace that chained her in a feeling of momentary terror.

"I say you did not expect to see me, Hortense de Martine!"—and there was a sudden and terrible change in his manner. "But I am here, and for work!"

A frenzy appeared to thrill his veins, seething as the hiss of molten lava in an icy stream; his haggard face flushed, and the fire in his eyes grew deadly.

As if by a responsive magnetism, she, too, altered. Her pallor was supplanted by a crimson tinging of the cheeks, and her black orbs flashed back defiance and hate upon the intruder.

Starting forward a step, she cried:

"Why do you come here? Do you think to frighten me? Beware how you deceive yourself! I am but a woman, yet you may find a match in me you do not expect. I do not fear you, Jules Willoughby! What do you want, I say?"

"Justice!" he hissed, while his eyes flamed fiercely, and his hands opened and shut rapidly by clutches and grasps.

"Justice! Then go seek it elsewhere; it is not here. Have you come to murder me for revenge? And did you think to find me unprepared? Ha! ha! Hortense De Martine is as cowardly as you ought to know that I—Mary! Mary!"—this to the nurse, who, attracted by the noise, appeared just then—"run to the road and see if my husband is in sight; bid whoever you see to hasten. Cry to them that I have captured Jules Willoughby! Ha! ha! ha!"—and to Willoughby again: "Stand where you are! Do not stir, or you die!"

Furiously she screamed the words, and simultaneously a pistol leaped forth in her hand, the shining barrel leveled at his head.

"Move one step, and I'll bore you with a bullet!" snapped Willoughby, covering the nurse with a pistol which flew from his bosom as though with the quickness of magic; and if you pull your trigger, madam, we'll die together!"—to Amelia Gregor, at whom he pointed a second pistol which gleamed in his other hand.

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"Murderer! It is your doing."

"Halt, I say! Don't come too near if you value your life. Your husband, Willse De Martine, is past all earthly aid. Now, listen to me. By chance, I obtained possession of the correspondence, no matter how. There is a letter—producing a letter which he had retained from among the missives he stole from Varian Cro-

sier, and which he had placed in his pocket before Crozier and Wynder discovered him in the room over the provision cellar.

"I will read it to you."

"I will not hear it!" exclaimed Hortense, with mad vehemence—(we will call her Hortense in the future, since we know, by Willoughby's address, her identity).

"But I think you will," leveling at her the pistol which he had drawn when she made the hasty movement toward him, as if to gripe him. "Here is something between your husband and Alick Cassin, which speaks for itself. Listen—"

"With death for an alternative, I suppose I can not avoid it. Oh, curse you, Jules Willoughby!"

"Reserve your curses for your own folly, Hortense De Martine; and listen to this."

CHAPTER XV.

REVEALING THE PLOT.

MARY DYLE glared at Jules Willoughby, overcome by her astonishment and with a mind mazed in wonder.

Hortense De Martine—long known only as Amelia Gregor—rocked backward and forward in the excitement of her impotent rage, digging her nails into her palms, and glancing from her flashing dark eyes the bitter anger which was chained and fettered by the menace of the pistol.

And slowly Jules Willoughby unfolded the letter, warily watching the woman, who he knew would not hesitate to avail herself of opportunity to injure him.

For ten years, Hortense De Martine, our devilish plans have been successful, and I, one of your husband's victims, have endured a living death. God alone knows, besides herself, what have been the tortures of your other victim, who was Elise. Alick Cassin is dead now, and I, Jules

"Willowd, July 18—
"ALICE CASSIN:—Any plan you have, if effective, suits me. If need be we will remove Nina, Stella, Willoughby, and a dozen more! The object must be accomplished."
WILSE DE MARTINE.

"Unfortunately, madam, I can not read the plot further. But last night, I perused the whole correspondence between Alice Cassin and Wilse De Martine. I will give you a summary of the plot. I want to show you that I can expose the whole trail of villainy which you and your husband have followed during the last ten years, in pursuance of a diabolical scheme to rob me of the woman I loved, and who loved me."

"Very interesting, I hear. Go on, Jules Willoughby. I am fascinated, and she smiled—a white smile, forced and girlish."

"While he slipped the letter back into his pocket and while she cast another eager but covert glance through the window, to note how close the staid was, almost laughing loud and hard in anticipation of what would come presently—and while Mary Dyle stood awed and statue-like, gazing in utter blankness on the tableau, her ears tingling with what she had heard—a momentary hush reigned, which was broken at last by Jules Willoughby."

"Here, madam, is your plot. By some means Wilse De Martine learned that it was the intention of Elise and myself to elope. He ascertained the night, the hour, in short, our whole plan. He frustrated it in this wise: Heaving home to a complete understanding with Alice Cassin, the chemist, he met at Shamrock Inn, on the afternoon of the day preceding the night for our elopement, Cassin had brought a veiled lady to the inn, who had nothing to say, who acted as if under some mesmerizing power which he exercised over her. About ten o'clock in the evening of that night, ten years ago, when there were several intimate friends—ladies and gentlemen—gathered in the palace parlors of Willowd, a servant—instructed and paid by Wilse De Martine to act cunningly—slipped a note into the hand of Elise, behaving as though he did it at great risk, as if he feared being seen by others, and giving her a warning look. 'Somebody has been here,' and apprehending some obstacle to the success of their plan of elopement, she hastily excused herself, left the company, and sought her room. At the same time Wilse De Martine also withdrew, and went out to the back of the house. When alone Elise read the note. It was in the handwriting of her lover. It bade her come to the carriage-way at the rear; said that they must flee instantly—it being then nearly two hours before the time agreed upon. Belleray the message to be genuine, from Jules Willoughby, utterly deceived by the shrewd imitation of chirography she observed without delay. Posing only to throw a lace shawl over her shoulders, and donning her cute hat, she stole away toward the spot indicated in the note. The night was dark. Not far ahead a carriage was waiting in the gloom. Filled with joyous anticipation, she sped onward. But she halted suddenly. She discovered four figures, apparently watching her, waiting for her—enough to chill her blood with horrible suspicion. Wilse De Martine grasped her, and stifled her cries; Alice Cassin applied some potent drug to her nostrils, and when insensible, she was placed inside the vehicle. The drive was done very noiselessly. The third figure was 'Thadlis, a villain who was then, and is still, in the employ of Wilse De Martine; and the fourth figure was the veiled female whom Alice Cassin had brought to Shamrock Inn. She was unconscious, and lay limply in the arms of the burly ruffian. Just as the carriage was about to start, the sound of horse-hoofs and rumbling wheels broke on their ears, and a second carriage dashed up, almost colliding with the first. This contained Jules Willoughby. He knew there was a trap set for him at Willowd, and had conceived the very same idea which his enemies had projected—that of persuading Elise to flee while the assemblage were busy and mirthful. He would not have known what was actually transpiring had it not been for the rashness of Wilse De Martine, who cried out:

"'Away! Away! Here is her lover himself! He will rescue her! Away there!'" Jules Willoughby was quick to divine the meaning of those words, and the fearful significance of the tableau which startled his gaze. He reared instantly that his Elise was being abducted.

"'Villains! What are you at?' he screamed, pouncing upon them, and clawing like a madman. Thadlis dropped his burden and grappled with the intruder upon their abominable plot. At one ponderous blow he felled Jules Willoughby to the earth, as though he had been stricken down by an ax. Before he fell, he gasped:

"Beware, murderer! Beware! You are not yet safe!" The driver of the second carriage was a coward, and he fled when he saw the encounter. Willoughby was thrust into the carriage where his own Elise lay unconscious, and while lifeless under the effect of the merciless stroke, he was dragged with the same hellish stuff which had robbed Elise of her senses. Wilse De Martine and Thadlis returned to the house, bearing with them the insensible form of the veiled female. By stealth, and through a side entrance, they gained the apartment of Elise unobserved, and laid the female on the bed. Wilse De Martine took from his pocket a large pastille, and a match. But before he could use the pastille the female unexpectedly aroused from the lethargy which had been forced upon her by the fiend, Alice Cassin. Bewildered and dismayed, she sprang from the bed, tore away the sable veil, and stared wildly at them. It was Stella Belleray! De Martine seized her gently but firmly by the wrist.

"Be quiet, he said. 'We will not harm you. We have brought you here that you might see Jules Willoughby.'"

"To see Jules Willoughby? Have brought me here to see Jules?" she exclaimed, as if under the impression that she was dreaming, and drawing one hand mechanically across her incredulous, staring eyes.

"Yes, to see him," spoke De Martine. "But to bring you to him, we must put you to sleep. You are now in the bedroom of Elise De Martine, your rival!"

"Ah! then this is some plot to kill me. I am lost! I am lost!" she wailed.

"No—to the contrary, Elise is removed. In two hours Jules will be here. He will awaken you, mistaking you for her—your resemblance her closely—and take you in a carriage to the house to be married. For, let me tell you, there was a plan between them to elope this night. When you are his wife, you will be satisfied. His disappointment at his blunder will pass away in time, and you will both be happy. Do as we wish and you shall be the wife of Jules Willoughby. Let me put you to sleep—you can not sleep of your own will, as you may make a long journey with him, you require rest beforehand."

Stella Belleray was not long snapping at the bait. She passionately adored Jules Willoughby. To secure him for her husband, she would adopt any means—driven to desperation

by his desertion of her, for the avowed purpose of wedding Elise De Martine, and having yielded to her passion for him till she felt that existence without him would be miserable.

"Let me put you into a pleasant dream," said De Martine, with oily persuasiveness. "A dream! Shall I see him in a dream?" "Yes—and wake to a realization of your hopes."

It did not involve much importunity. Rejoicing in the promise that she should awake to find herself in the arms of the man she loved, thoroughly deluded by the affected sincerity of Wilse De Martine, and not even questioning the motive of these strangers, whose names she did not know, whose faces she had never seen, and whose ardor in her behalf was unnatural, she returned to the couch, and voluntarily inhaled an intoxicating perfume which he gave her. When she appeared to be overcome by the odorless smelling-bottle—another of Alice Cassin's vile preparations—he again brought forth the pastille and the match. Placing the first on the bosom of the girl, he ignited it and drew back. For a second the pastille sputtered and sparkled; then, with a sharp, rustling hiss, it seemed to resolve itself inside out, rising upward, coiling over, twisting and squirming like a thing of life, and presently expired. A bluish smoke hovered like a mist above the couch, a strange, cloying aroma filled the atmosphere of the room. But instead of the pastille, there now lay coiled upon the breast of the sleeper, a slender serpent, miraculously perfect, even to the flat, hooded head and everted fang, and the tiny orbs of venomous fire.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 201.)

Weekly Budget.

The Formation of Clouds.—Muhry has lately presented, in a very impressive manner, the conclusions deducible from some observations published by Meissner, in 1893, on the formation of vapor vesicles, and of clouds. The researches of Meissner were mainly directed to the relations of ozone and antozone, and it was only as one of the incidental results of his work that he announced that, without the presence of oxygen in the air, there could be no clouds. In regard to this important point, Meissner's researches have apparently not attracted the attention that is due to them, and Muhry urges that meteorologists and physicists are not yet to consider that the question of the existence of vesicles of vapor has been settled in the negative. Basing his conclusions on Meissner's researches, Muhry says that the condensation and precipitation of aqueous vapor would take place immediately, in the form of small drops, if it were not for the presence of oxygen in the air, but that this gas itself brings about the transition stage—the vapor vesicle. The experiments of Meissner consisted in confining within the receiver of an air-pump a mixture of aqueous vapor and the gas to be experimented on. By a rapid stroke of the piston the mixture is then quite suddenly expanded, and the cooling due to expansion produces a precipitation of a portion of the inclosed vapor. The faint cloud that is seen by close observation within the receiver continues but a few minutes, and was first observed with special care by Saussure, in 1783. Meissner, however, has shown that when other gases replace air within the receiver, the condensation in general takes place not in the form of a cloud, but of fine light drops that fall directly to the bottom, the cloud being produced only when oxygen is present, either pure or mixed with other gases. These experiments have been repeatedly and very carefully made by Meissner with air, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbonic acid gas, and in pure aqueous vapor alone, and in various mixtures of these gases. Meissner further measured the exact degree of expansion needed to produce these vapor clouds, and found that saturated air at 30.0 inches deposited its vapor when the pressure is suddenly reduced to 21.4 inches; by a second step he passed from saturated air at 21.4 inches to 16.1 inches, when a somewhat fainter cloud was formed; the third cloud was formed on passing from 16.1 to 13.8 inches, the fourth on passing from 13.8 to 10.7, and a fifth on passing from 10.7 to 8.5 inches. These barometric pressures correspond respectively to altitudes above the sea of about 8,000, 15,000, 19,000, 23,000, and 27,000 feet, and the clouds successively formed in the rarest medium being extremely delicate and evanescent. For all former degrees of expansion Meissner was unable to perceive any cloud vesicles, although minute transparent drops were present. These results would be directly applicable to our atmosphere had Meissner been able to reduce the temperature of his receiver to that experienced in the upper regions of the atmosphere.

The Esquimaux Dog.—What the reindeer is to the Laplander, the Siberian dog is to the Esquimaux. He is their only beast of burden, and is generally employed in drawing materials in a sledge over the boundless and dreary deserts of snow, where the cold is so intense that no other domestic animal, except the reindeer, could exist, and bear the hardships this animal is called upon to undergo. They are generally fed once a day—at night—their allowance being a dried fish, weighing perhaps two pounds. The sledge to which they are harnessed is about ten feet in length and two feet in width, made with seasoned birch timber, and combines, to a surprising degree, the qualities of strength and lightness. It is simply a skeleton framework fastened together with lashings of dried seal-skin, and mounted on broad, curved runners. No iron whatever is used in the construction, and it does not weigh more than twenty pounds; yet it will sustain a load of four or five hundred pounds, and endure the severest shocks of rough mountain travel, occasionally rendered more than ordinarily severe by the erratic behavior of the dogs, who sometimes, should a deer or fox cross their route, can not overcome their wolfish propensities, but give chase in a most determined manner, heedless alike of the driver's shouts and the loaded team behind them, dragging the sledge and its contents at lightning speed over bluffs and down steep inclines, often not being brought to a standstill until submerged several feet in a snow-drift. The driver of a dog-team carries no whip, but has, instead, a thick stick with a spiked point, which is used to check the speed of the sledge in descending hills. The number of dogs harnessed to the sledges varies from seven to fifteen, according to the nature of the country to be traversed, and the weight of the load. Under favorable circumstances, eleven dogs will make from forty to fifty miles a day with a man and a load of four hundred pounds. They are harnessed to the sledge in successive couples, by a long, central thong of seal-skin, to which each dog is attached by a collar and a short trace. They are guided and controlled entirely by the voice and by a leader-dog, who is especially trained for the purpose.

Diseases of Artisans and Mechanics.—A careful investigation has been made of the special diseases incident to the occupation of artisans and mechanics, and the following are

some of the most interesting among the mass of facts and data brought to light.

It appears that gliders are subject to mercurial affections. They suffer from giddiness, asthma, and very frequently from partial paralysis, which often induces a peculiar kind of stammering; they also frequently suffer from unpleasant ulcers in the month.

Miners in the quicksilver mines suffer from vertigo, palsy, and convulsions, and the occupation cannot be pursued a long time.

Pottery glaziers, who use lead largely, get into a condition very similar to that described above, with the addition of dropsy, loss of teeth, and enlarged spleen. Palsy of the limbs, especially of the arms, is a common disease among them, as also is consumption.

Glass-blowers are the victims of those affections produced by sudden vicissitudes of temperature—rheumatism and various inflammations. They are apt to become thin, and delicate, and their eyes get weak.

Stone-cutters inhale the sharp particles, which tend to produce disease of the lungs, while plasterers suffer from excessive moisture—they are also troubled with labored breathing, and they digest badly.

Filers are short-lived; for whether the metal be brass or iron, the fine sharp particles make their way into the lungs of even the hardest workers, which they develop diseases—sometimes asthma, sometimes consumption.

Dogs.—The St. Bernard dogs have always been accounted the most sagacious. There are none of the pure breed in this country, therefore the dog which takes their place in the favor of Americans. This species is more fond of persons than any other, while hunting dogs—the setters and pointers, which are equally intelligent—become attached to following-people, and the attentiveness of the chase. The shepherd's dog is considered the primitive stock from which all varieties are derived. He is remarkably affectionate and sagacious, and appears to exert a degree of superiority over animals who require human protection. The flock and the herd obey his voice, while he guides and guards them. The wolf-dog is the largest of the domestic, often growing four feet and a half in height, and the size of a year-old calf. Hunting dogs have the quickest and most distinguishing sense of smelling. In tropical climates they lose scent from the constant odors of putrefaction which prevail, and are useless to the sportsman. The gaze-hound, a very remarkable dog, the species of which is now lost, hunted by the eye and not by the scent.

Fight Between a Dog and Lynx.—A letter from East Walker river, Nevada, relates the following: On the 25th of December, Eddie Dooley was out playing down by the river bank, in Esmeralda county, and his dog was going around and scared a Rocky Mountain lynx. Eddie went back to the house, and told his father about it. On the 26th he went back again, and his dog—only eight months old—ran to the lynx in the river, and they fought under the water for about fifty yards, and then came to the surface of the water. Then they let go their holds and went down again. When they came up the dog had killed the lynx. Then the little master waded in and got it, and brought it to shore. The boy is twelve years old. The lynx was four feet long, and two feet three inches in height. It is said by all the oldest mountaineers that it is the biggest lynx that ever has been captured in the country.

German Forests.—Few people have any idea of the extent of forest-land in Germany, and most imagine that of the Black Forest little is left except tradition. On the contrary, in Hanover alone there are 900,000 acres of wood under State management, while nearly a fourth part of the area of Prussia is in forest, although half of that is in private hands. As is well known, the forest administration in particular districts has long been famous, especially in Thuringia and the Hartz Mountains. In North Germany generally the responsibilities are allotted in districts among a carefully organized body of officers, presided over by a forest director. The appointments are fairly remunerated, and they are so eagerly sought after that candidates will remain on probation for years at their own cost, or with moderate and precarious pay, in the hope of securing a place in the corps at last.

A Strange Story at Sea.—In the year 1789, the captain of a Greenland whaling vessel found himself at night surrounded by the icebergs, and "lay to" until morning, expecting every moment to be ground to pieces. In the morning he looked about and saw a ship near by. He hailed it, but received no answer. Getting into a boat with some of his crew, he pushed out to the mysterious craft. Coming alongside the vessel, he saw through the port-hole a man at a table, as though keeping a log-book, frozen to death. The last date in the log-book was 1772, showing that the vessel had been drifting for thirteen years among the ice. The sailors were found, some frozen among the hammocks, and others in the cabin. For thirteen years the ship had been carrying its burden of corpses—a drifting sepulcher manned by a frozen crew.

Paris Pigeons.—A new thing in pigeons is being exhibited on the Paris-streets. A Frenchman trundles about a pigeon-house on wheels. The flock—ten or twelve in number—are at full liberty to remain in or out. The locomotive dove-coat is planted on a corner. The Frenchman blows a trumpet, and off fly the whole flock a quarter of a mile or so, settling eventually on housetops and window-sills. Another trumpet blast, and back they come. As they approach, the Frenchman holds up a small red flag. That red flag is for one particular bird, which knows its color, and settles upon the staff as the showman holds it horizontally. In like manner are blue, white, and parti-colored flags held up, each one of which seems the exclusive property or signal of a particular bird, and on which that special bird, which meantime has been waiting on some window ledge or house-top, settles.

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11. Irona. By Edward S. Ellis.
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BEADLE AND ADAMS, Publishers,
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TO ADVERTISERS.

A few Advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measurement.

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The enormous circulation which these books have had, has been owing both to their remarkable cheapness and uniform excellence. Prepared by the Best Writers in America, each volume is a perfect story—a captivating romance of American life, so carefully written and so carefully edited, that not a word is to be found in the entire series to which the most fastidious taste can take exception. They are one and all, pure and good, and have become household favorites beyond any books at any price, ever published in this country.

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8. Seth Jones.
9. The Slave Sculptor.
10. Backwoods Bride.
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12. Bill Biddon, Trapper.
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36. Rifflemen of Miami.
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45. Esther.
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49. The Gold Hunters.
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51. The Two Guineas.
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53. Hates and Loves.
54. Myrtle.
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60. J. D. Davies' Client.
61. Laughing Eyes.
62. The Unknown.
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66. The Hunter's Vow.
67. Indian Jim.
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Old Pegs, the Mountaineer.

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Base-Ball Player

A CASE OF HOPTICS.

BY JON JOY, JR.

"There was a man in our town
Who was most wondrous wise,
You'll always find some two or three
In towns about this size
Whose heads are crammed so very full
Of wisdom's gathered wealth,
That it is plainly to be seen
They can't enjoy good health.

This man's eyes itched; to scratch them well
Was the height of his desire;
He turned a double summerset
And landed in the briars.
He might have hired a scratching cat
At very little price,
But still he thought his plan the best,
And he was wondrous wise.

Now when he came to look around,
Imagine his surprise
And pain of heart when he beheld
He hadn't any eyes!
And such an accident as this
To men as wise as he,
Although they had but half an eye,
Was a sad sight to see.

He failed to see how it could be.
The more he looked about
The more convinced did he become
That both his eyes were out.
He gazed upon his serious loss
With philosophic mind,
And saw that since he'd lost his eyes
He might as well go blind.

He saw that men who lacked their eyes
Were likely not to see
Into all things as was those
Who yet have two or three.
The observations he observed
Were very common wise;
I think the first thing he remarked
Was, "Mercy, bless my eyes!"

He felt his sight would be impaired
For many years to come;
And plainly saw he ought have staid
And had them scratched at home.
Adjusting then his spectacles
He looked across the rim—
His eyes were plainly visible
A-dangling from some limb.

The sight affected him to tears,
And made his soft heart sore.
He prayed he might be called to see
A sight like this no more.
He argued on this principle:
A dog's bark cures the bite,
And thought if he'd jump in again
That he'd come out all right.

Now I can swear upon my oath
There isn't any man
Save those raised in our town who would
Have thought of such a plan.
He turns three double summersets,
And through the brush he flies;
Then looks into a looking-glass
And finds he has his eyes!

Strange Stories.

TANNAHAUSER, THE TROUBADOUR;
A Legend of Thuringia.

BY AGILE PENNE.

THE shades of night were gathering fast over
peaked mountain-top, sheltered valley, and
grain-clad plain, as a mail-clad knight rode
through the wooded defiles that fringed the
sides of the rugged mountains of Horsaiberg.
Slowly the knight rode on, careless of the
darkness that lowered upon him, heedless of the
rocky way, ignorant of the danger that
menaced the unwary traveler, who, at the
twilight hour, dared to ride from Eisenach to
Gotha, past the haunted mountain, known far
and wide as the Horsaiberg.

No peasant of Eisenach's pleasant plains but
could have told him of the mystic cavern
deep within the bowels of the mountain; no
burgher within thriving Gotha's walls, but
knew the legend of the fair women that
formed Venus's court in the vaulted chamber
deep within the center of the Horsaiberg.

But the knight who rode so heedless onward
was a stranger to Thuringia; a Frank born
and bred, and no better gentleman had ever
lifted lance in defense of the lily flowers than
Tannhauser, known to fame as "The Troubadour."

As skilled in touching the strings of the
lonely lute as in wielding the captain's lance,
France boasted no cavalier his superior in all
the attributes of nobility.

And yet, as the twilight darkens into the
gloom of the night, young Tannhauser rides on
alone, a self-made exile from his native land,
his heart filled with woe, and his brow furrowed
by the lines of care.

A year and a twelve-month ago, one of
France's fairest daughters had plighted her
troth to Tannhauser, the Troubadour.
And now, in that sad evening hour, the
maiden knelt and prayed, the bride of Heaven,
a vowed nun, within a dark convent's walls,
and young Tannhauser rides on alone through
the German land.

It was a simple story, and one that the world
has heard oft before.

Tannhauser had sailed with the African
Crusader; a prisoner had fallen to the insolent
foe, and in the Moorish dungeons had languished
for many a long month.

The expedition returned without the Troubadour,
and rumor gave out that he, on the field of
glory, had fallen.

The maiden he had loved so well sought refuge
at once in the cloister; since her earthly
love had died, the bride of Heaven alone she
would be.

The chant was said and the mass was sung,
and holy mother Church received within her
fold another fresh young heart.

And then, after the deed was done, from the
Moorish dungeon the young Frenchman escaped,
and straight came home to claim his bride,
but the year of novitiate was over, and the
solemn vows had been taken.

In vain young Tannhauser called upon old
mother Church to give him back his fair young
bride. Cowled monk and veiled sister—heart's
chilled to earthly passions—alike said nay.

And then the despairing lover waxed wroth.
With some few congenial spirits, desperate as
himself, Tannhauser tried to tear from the cold
stone walls and the cloister's gloom the fresh
young heart that had sought refuge there.

The attempt failed, and the stern abbot, old
in years, and cold in heart, called down upon
the head of the daring youth the thunders of
an outraged Church. The civil law, too, reached
forth its armed hand. Tannhauser, the Troubadour,
was forced to fly, a fugitive from his native land.

Daring and desperate, then, the darkness
and the wild way suited well with the stormy
passion that was raging within his outraged
heart.

Life and limb had he freely ventured—gold
and blood had he freely spent for the Church
that within its living tomb had engulfed his
young love.

The twilight grew dense in the dark defile,
and the sky above was dark, as Tannhauser
came to where the side of the Horsaiberg
frowned bare.

A deep cavern he saw, extending into the
mountain, and as he glanced at the threatening
clouds above, the thought came that here was
shelter if the storm burst and the rain descended.

The noble steed that the Troubadour bestowed
felt the light, half-unconscious pressure
upon its gilded rein, and halted.

And then, as Tannhauser looked into the
dark cavern a wondrous vision burst upon his
sight.

Within the mouth of the deep recess stood a
female form framed in the matchless symmetry
that the Greeks of old gave to the queen of
womanly beauty, peerless Venus.

A moment Tannhauser gazed entranced upon
the sight, for he could scarce believe his eyes;
and then in his heart, withered and sore, he felt
a new passion flaring.

"Wilt not dismount, oh, knight, and tarry
awhile with me?" the woman said, her voice
sweet as a golden-stringed harp, swept by fairy
fingers. "The night is dark, the way is drear;
in my palace within the mountain the ruby wine
flows free, the light is streaming ever from
golden lamps, and maidens, fair as the mermaid's
beauty, wait to welcome great Tannhauser,
flower of chivalry."

Slowly yielding to the magic spell of the
siren's witchery, the knight descended from the
saddle. Gone was now the fatigue of the journey;
the coat of mail—his warlike harness—no
longer galled his limbs, but sat as easy upon
him as if each piece of steel were as light as
gossamer web. His heart, too, no longer felt
like a lump of lead within his breast, but
swelled high with a strange, wild passion.

"Who are you?" the knight questioned, as he
drew near to the woman who possessed the
face of an angel and the form of a sylph.

"I am the goddess Venus," the woman answered,
beckoning the youth to approach still
nearer. "The men of old worshipped me;
pleasure lies within my gift. Come with me into
my mountain home, and I will teach thee to
forget the earthly maid for whose loss you sorrow.
One request alone I make. Cast away the
warrior's sword you wear. The symbol of the
hilt is not for me or mine."

Tannhauser was in the mood for desperate
deeds. The cross-hilted sword he plucked from
its scabbard and tossed it away. Then into the
cavern of the Horsaiberg he followed the fair
goddess, who in the old time had won the
golden apple.

Scarcely had Tannhauser passed within the
dark portal when the forked lightning and the
dread thunder rolled across the sky.

Was it the rejoicing of the spirits of evil that
Venus had lured another mortal to her magic
abode?

Seven years in careless revelry Tannhauser,
the Troubadour, passed in the golden palace of
the heathen goddess, and then, appetite began
to pall; he had drunk of the cup of pleasure
that he no longer craved the draft. In one
unceasing round of mirth and revelry had
passed the seven years. No thought of church
or priest, or rite or prayer. But the all-powerful
arm of Heaven penetrated even to the heart
of the mountain, and deliverance was nigh.

In the mazes of the dance, as Tannhauser
extended his arms to embrace the goddess, upon
the ground there fell the shadow of a cross.

"Oh, Virgin mother, save me!" cried Tannhauser,
as the sacred symbol woke remembrance
and broke the magic spell, which had
bound his senses in a mystic chain.

The sirens, the golden palace, all faded in
an instant, and Tannhauser found himself upon
the bleak mountain-side, all clad in rags, and
aged almost beyond expression.

Quick to the nearest priest he hurried, and
told the story of his temptation and fall.

The father, aghast, cried out that such a tale
was much beyond his comprehension, and that
absolution he could not grant.

And so Tannhauser journeyed through the
land; to priest after priest he made confession,
and each and all returned him the same answer.
The crime was so great that they knew not
whether his soul could be freed from sin or no.

To Rome then—the eternal city, perched upon
the seven hills—Tannhauser journeyed.

Pope Urban sat in the papal chair, chief of
the Christian world.

With staring eyes and fearful face, the pontiff
heard the fearful story of Tannhauser.

"Absolution! It can not be!" the ghostly father
cried; "as soon shall this dry staff that I hold
in my hands grow green and blossom as
guilt like thine be forgiven."

Tannhauser fled in wild despair.

Then lo! and behold within three days the
pontiff's staff put forth buds and burst into
flower!

Search was made for wretched Tannhauser,
and the messengers, tracking him close, saw
the gloom of the Horsaiberg closed around him,
as feebly he entered the only refuge left. Tannhauser
was never seen again. And Satan
laughed as he recorded the soul, sealed to him
by human bigotry.

Who Was to Blame?

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Everybody was astounded almost beyond
expression when the fact became decidedly patent
that Mr. Edward Raymond was paying his
sincere addresses to little Gussie Lawrence;
but when everybody had prophesied that if Mr.
Raymond succeeded in actually marrying the
outrageous little flirt, they were surprised at the
fulfillment of their own saying, and could only
look on and wonder at the grand wedding—and
prophesy further developments of the
bride's coquetry.

Gussie Lawrence had turned many a fellow's
head, and touched many a fellow's heart; she
was never without a lover, and yet, no one
could say, who knew her well—including
these beaux of hers—that Gussie had ever
been in love.

She was gay, airy, winsome, pretty; she
had a vivacity about her that never trenched
on vulgarity, a sweet selfishness that was
her rarest charm—the charms that had at first
attracted Edward Raymond, the grave, staid
man of twice Gussie's years, who had learned
to adore her, and taught her to love him so
dearly.

At first, Gussie had laughed when any one
teased her on her new conquest; then, when
she knew Mr. Raymond better, she had
quietly denied flirting with him; later, blushed
prettily if any one mentioned him, then, openly
avowed their engagement, and demanded to be
congratulated on having secured "the best
man in the world."

People—that vague power who has such
work to do, though nobody knows who does it—
were sure the engagement would not last;
Mr. Raymond was too sensible to marry such a
chit of a girl, for all she had such pretty blue
eyes, and spun gold hair; or, if the thrall of
her witchery still had him bound, it was almost
certain that Gussie would tire of him before
the wedding; and then, actually married, and
back from their four weeks' tour, and settled
down in Elm avenue, this same prophetic
body waited to see if matrimony had cured
Mrs. Gussie Raymond of her flirting propensities.

Some of this talk came, in a very round-
about way, to Mr. Raymond's ears, and he nat-
urally told Gussie what he heard.

She laughed, regarded it quite a joke, and
turned the conversation adroitly.

"Did I tell you Mark was coming? Mark
Sunderland? You know we sent cards to
them, and wrote to Mrs. Sunderland to visit
us at her earliest convenience?"

She was so pretty in her blue merino wrap-
per, with the black velvet buttons; she read
from the letter in her hands tiny extracts with
such a sweet, gracious way, and—spoke of this
gentleman friend in such a charmingly
familiar manner.

"Mr. Sunderland? I have forgotten, really,
the name of your friends of yours. It is the
lady's husband you mentioned, I presume?"

Somehow—wasn't it strange—Mr. Raymond
wondered at the slightly-deepened tint on his
wife's cheeks.

"Oh, no! Mark is her son—he's not mar-
ried; why were we—"

She stopped, point blank, actually distressed
in her confusion.

Her husband pitied her.

"What, darling? If you and Mr. Sunder-
land were very dear friends once, surely I am
not jealous now."

He reached his hand over the little table to
her and pressed her fingers reassuringly.

"But I was afraid you would feel—feel, sorry
you know, to have him come."

"I shall be delighted to have him, dear—if
you want him."

Somehow—oh! that hateful vagueness of
thought!—he thought she would make some
pretty little demerise to his will—understood
contrarily to his expression.

"Oh, I do want him!"

She said it so suddenly, so eagerly, so earnest-
ly; and that moment Edward Raymond
wished Mark Sunderland had never been such
a very special friend of Gussie's.

He looked, just a little moodily, into her
frank, fair face.

"Well, dear, I'll try not to be jealous. But,
you'll promise not to flirt with him?"

He might have been in fun or earnest for all
Gussie could tell. But she laughed joyously.

"The idea, you hear, old dear! as if I'd
flirt with the handsomest man living when I've
got you."

Rather equivocal that compliment, but Mr.
Raymond only thought that if Mark Sunder-
land was the handsomest fellow going, and
Gussie had liked him, and people said she would
flirt—why—why—

He felt a little cross and savage—and yes, in
plain English—jealous!

He was a handsome fellow, as Gussie had in-
ferred, stylish in his manner of dress, gallant
in his demeanor, frank and free in his inter-
course. A very good sort of guest, one whom
Mr. Raymond would have appreciated to the
full if he had not been forever remembering
that Gussie and Mark had once been—what?
Engaged lovers? Gussie never had completed
that sentence, and he certainly never would
soil her confidence.

Sometimes it struck him that Mark and Gus-
sie were very friendly; *remarkably* in fact, in
such other and once he spoke of it to Gussie,
not as carelessly as he might have done, either.

She had flushed in a moment, and the tears
sprung to her eyes.

"Oh, Edward, how can you? He is en-
gaged to my cousin, too! and there are so
many things to consult me about for the wed-
ding. Besides that, I haven't had a bit of
enjoyment since we—since—I mean—oh, Ed! I
wish you'd let me alone!"

Such a curious, disappointed speech surprised
Mr. Raymond, and he thought it over, in all its
parts, as he rode down to his store that morn-
ing.

"Engaged to her cousin?" Well, after con-
siderable cogitation, Mr. Raymond came to the
conclusion that that was altogether "too thin;"
not that he suspected Gussie of complicity in a
falsehood—not at all. He had no doubt that
Sunderland had told her so; and the next news
he expected to hear was that the "cousin,"
was just the same age, height, size and style of
his wife, and named Gussie, too!

So Mrs. Raymond had had no fun since her
marriage? and to make up the deficiency, she
wanted to be let alone to flirt to her heart's
content with her cousin's betrothed!

Mr. Raymond was quite sarcastic to himself,
very wroth with Mr. Mark Sunderland, and un-
questionably jealous on Gussie's account, as he
walked into his private office to read the vo-
luminous mail awaiting his attention.

"My dear, what shall I bring you from
Washington? I must be off in a day or so—
the letter came this morning."

Mrs. Raymond glanced up from her sewing
at her husband's face; radiant now, as in the
days before Mark Sunderland had come; glad-
ness, because Mark Sunderland had that day
gone.

"Nothing will be an equivalent for your ab-
sence, Edward. I only wish Mark had stayed
till you came back. I shall be dreadfully
lonely between both of you being away. But I
would like a Bonnet black silk—twenty-eight
yards, you know."

Mr. Raymond smiled a little quizzically, and
made a memorandum on his huge table.

"I can't tell how long I may be gone, dear;
but I will send your sister Annie over to stay
with you, and you can discuss the style of the
new dress two or three days, I am sure."

The next morning Mr. Raymond started off;
telegraphed from Washington he would be so
tired, fully a week; and then, a day later,
finding a sudden delay present itself, started
for home.

He bought Gussie her silk—a beauty—and
then took his seat in a Pullman car for the
journey to New York.

He had just crouched down in a corner of the
car, in one of the red-velvet chairs, and slouch-
ed his new fur traveling-cap over his eyes—he
had bought it in Washington—for a nap, when
a voice in the very next chair made his blood
bound like wild-fire.

"Wouldn't it be a huge joke if we should
come across Raymond?"

And it was not only Mark Sunderland's
voice, but Mark himself, in all his beauty, lean-
ing very confidentially toward—

Heaven and earth!—his own wife!

Gussie, sure as fate!—small, slight, graceful;
Gussie, in a black alpaca and waterproof, he
would recognize anywhere in the world! Gus-
sie—and Mark Sunderland's arm around her
shoulder, and his mustache bending very near
her double gray tissue veil!

His heart was thumping like a sledge-ham-
mer; he understood it all, at once. Gussie had
telegraphed to Mark as soon as she had re-
ceived his own dispatch, and then for the "fun"
—she lacked fun, he remembered savagely, had
gone on to Washington to meet him, and ride
home with him. What a fool he was to forget
that Sunderland lived in Washington.

Well, here they were, under his eyes and
ears; and he sat there, resolved to keep them
well in sight until he could confront them in
his own house. There was a deadly pain at
his heart to think Gussie could do this; there
was wilder wrath for the man who dared lead
her on.

So he sat motionless—a pent-up volcano;
hearing him call her Gussie—bah, it sickened

him, somehow, such airiness; saw him ar-
range a tress of hair on her shoulder, and
once—yes, once, saw Gussie's own hand, white,
slender, with the heavy wedding-ring upon it,
flash from under her cloak, and touch Mark's
shoulder.

That was a horrid ride, but it came to an
end just as the gray dawn broke; and Mr. Ray-
mond slunk to one side to let the guilty pair
pass out of the train before him.

They went straight to his house, and he fol-
lowed, only pausing when he saw them through
the door, to buy a rawhide at a store just open-
ing. Then he went straight on—home—ah,
home was it? His latch-key let him in; he
went into the parlor—and met Mark Sunder-
land standing over the register, easy, hand-
some, happy.

"Raymond! I declare, this is a surprise!
Where—"

He cut him short with a word.

"Where's Gussie?"

Sunderland stared a second.

"Gussie? Upstairs, I presume; at least, I
left her and my Gussie there a second ago.
Congratulate me?—or—I see it as plain as day
—would you rather cowlhide me?"

Just then she came down—his very own Gus-
sie, in her blue wrapper, and fresh coiffure,
fairly dragging a black-robed girl with her.

"Oh, Ed, if here isn't Gussie Severn—Gussie
Sunderland, I mean! Ain't she sweet?"

Raymond thought she was sweet, very, but
not half so sweet as his own fair bride, who
never, to this day, knows of her husband's
jealousy. Mark never told; but the cowlhide
hangs in Mr. Raymond's study, a mute witness
of his unjust accusations; and only Ed, Jr.,
views it with awe-stricken eyes.

A Dive for Life.
AN EPISODE OF THE SEA.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

The ship Eden, of Liverpool, bound to Val-
paraiso with a miscellaneous cargo, including
over a hundred tons of gunpowder, had not
been long at sea, when the conduct of her cap-
tain, John Bowen, became strange and alarm-
ing. He would stand for hours bareheaded,
with the hot sun streaming down upon him, his
eyes rolling wildly, and fierce imprecations
breaking from his lips.

The man who passed him at such a time
would be sure to have a marlin-spike or a hand-
spike flung at his head, not even the mates
being exempted from such rough treatment.

The captain, who had always been a strange
man, was evidently becoming insane; a fact
which, while it alarmed the crew, could not
of course terrify them as it did the pretty,
modest young girl—the captain's niece, who
had taken passage aboard the Eden to join her
mother in Valparaiso.

Lucia Brenton—such was the girl's name—
had, since her father's death, a few years be-
fore, taught school in Liverpool. Her mother,
soon after Mr. Brenton died, received news of
an interest which her husband, who was a
Chilian, had owned in a silver mine. She was
engaged to Valparaiso as soon as possible, wrote
Lucia to come on, as the property would yield
both the widow and her daughter a comfort-
able competence for life.

Lucia, as stated, was a pretty girl. She was
of a lithe, flexible, well-rounded form, and,
naturally enough, inherited from her father the
Chilian style of beauty, having large, soft, black
eyes, a clear, olive complexion, and mobile, ex-
pressive features.

The second mate, Mr. Braddon—a fine,
manly, intelligent young fellow—admired
Lucia from the moment he helped her up the
vessel's gangway off Liverpool, and noted the
deep blush suffusing her smooth, round cheeks,
as her modest "Thank you" was uttered, and
the soft black eyes were a moment lifted to-
ward him, to be veiled the next by the long,
curling lashes.

The late insubordinate behavior of her uncle ter-
rified Lucia; but Mr. Braddon assured her that
the madman should not be allowed to harm
her.

One day, however, the captain, during his
ravings on deck, told her that he would throw
her overboard, which so terrified Lucia that
she now seldom ventured on deck, keeping
herself most of the time in her room in the
cabin with the door locked.

A week after, having noticed that the captain
every day became more violent, the mates held
a consultation, when it was resolved that the
madman should be put in confinement.

The ship at this time lay becalmed in lat.
17° 28', several hundreds of miles to the east-
ward of the Carribee Islands. It was very
warm and sultry here, and the captain, over-
powered by the heat, after raving for some
hours, sunk down on the carpenter's chest aft,
apparently to sleep.

"There couldn't be a better time than now
to secure him," whispered the mate.

The captain, however, now rose and staggered
down into the cabin.

"He will soon fall asleep below," added the
mate; "and then will be time to fasten him
up."

Not long after, the first and third mates, who
now were conversing amidships, heard a roar-
ing, crackling sound, and saw smoke issuing
from the cabin.

Running to the companionway, they beheld
the cabin on fire, and lurid flames also bursting
from the room in which, in little kegs, the
gunpowder was stowed!

"All hands aft! Water here! Fire! fire!"
called the mate.

The captain rushed up the steps, foaming at
the mouth, his eyes rolling wildly, a loaded re-
volver in his hand!

"Back! back!" he screamed. "Vipers!
sharks, away! I am going to blow up the ship!"

The men, with buckets of salt water, now
came, when the crack of the revolver was
heard, and one poor fellow, screaming with
anguish, fell, the shot passing slantingly
through his eye.

The other men drew back, while the captain,
dancing up and down and flourishing his re-
volver, declared he would shoot them all!

There was no time to lose, as the gunpowder
might easily be ignited.

Springing upon the madman, the mate en-
deavored to knock the revolver from his grasp,
when the infuriated man, drawing a knife
from his belt, stabbed him in the shoulder. As
he fell back, the captain placed the muzzle of
his revolver against his forehead, and was
about pulling the trigger, when Braddon, who
had been aloft, now arriving, knocked the
weapon from his hand, and hurling him down,
held him, with the assistance of another man,
to the deck, calling on the rest of the crew to
secure him.

Handcuffs were soon fastened on the cap-
tain's wrists, and several of the men held him
in custody; while the rest endeavored to ex-
tinguish the flames, which were spreading
rapidly, and had already nearly reached the
gunpowder.

Meanwhile, Braddon, dashing open the door
of Lucia's room, was surprised to find it empty.

"Wretch! where is she?" he cried, address-
ing the maniac.

The latter, however, raving wildly and inco-
herently, would not say a word about his
niece.

"She will perish! she will perish!" cried
Braddon, vainly searching hither and thither for
the girl.

"Lucia! Lucia! where are you?"

"No use," the wounded mate now said;
those flames will reach the powder in another
second. We can't put them out, and we must
take to the boats!—On deck for your lives,
and down with the boats!" he added in a low
voice.

All the men except Braddon rushed on deck.
The boats were lowered, and the third and first
officers vainly called on the young man to join
them.

He would not come, however, and now
deeming it high time to save their own lives,
all on deck descended into the boats, with the
madman properly secured, among them.

Meanwhile Braddon, determined to find Lu-
cia or perish, had plunged into the hold, when
he fancied he heard a faint voice beneath him.